



MEMORY, HISTORY, JUSTICE IN HEGEL

ANGELICA NUZZO



Memory, History, Justice in Hegel

Also by Angelica Nuzzo

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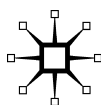
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Memory, History, Justice in Hegel

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*to the same one
memory is of the future,
remember*

History say, *Don't hope*
On this side of the grave,
But then, once in a lifetime
The longed-for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up,
And hope and history rhyme

Seamus Heaney

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Acknowledgments

The core idea for this book emerged in the writing of two essays for *The Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*: “History and Memory in Hegel’s *Phenomenology*” (29, 1, 2008, 161–98), and “Memory, History, and Justice in Hegel’s System” (31, 2, 2010, 349–89). Materials from these two essays can be found, respectively, in the Introduction and [Chapter 1](#), and in [Chapter 4](#). I am grateful to *The Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* for permission to use these materials. And I am particularly grateful to its editor, Erick Raphael, for having enthusiastically endorsed the project of the two essays and for having pushed me to write the second before the memory of the first vanished from my horizon.

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Introduction

This book offers a new perspective on Hegel's idea of history. While the philosophy of history is today one of the most discredited and certainly least studied parts of Hegel's system, a "standard" interpretation of it continues to be cited in the debate among historians and philosophers – although it is cited, more often than not, in order to be rejected by the historians as a chief example of suspicious "philosophy of history" (teleological, based on faith in progress, etc.) and by the philosophers as an outright metaphysical mystification (What is "spirit" as the subject of history?). In this work, I propose a reconstruction of Hegel's idea of history and historical process – a reconstruction that in two main respects departs from the way interpreters usually approach the topic. First, taking as my starting point the recent debate on the relation between history and memory, I investigate the systematic connection between these two concepts in Hegel's philosophy and construe his idea of history as a result. In choosing an "external" perspective as the entry point in Hegel's thought, my aim is to set on new ground the interpretation of this part of his philosophy, which has reached today a phase of sterile *impasse*. Thus, instead of taking for granted the notion that Hegel's "spirit" (*Geist*) is historical, I reconstruct his considered justification of this claim: on what (systematic, theoretical, factual) basis does Hegel claim that spirit is historical? This is the central issue that I set out to address in this book. How is history first introduced in the development of spirit, that is, on which systematic and conceptual grounds? Does memory play a role in Hegel's argument? With the recent debate in mind, I am interested in assessing Hegel's contribution to the question of whether memory can be the basis of history or do we rather need to think of history as generated by a different principle than memory – a principle that is perhaps less partial, less ideological, less subjective.

This, however, requires an investigation of the concept of memory in Hegel's philosophy.

The second novelty of my approach to the topic lies in the range of texts that I consider relevant for Hegel's notion of history and historical process. Instead of focusing, as the literature generally does, on the compilation posthumously published as the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, I examine the interplay of history and memory in the entire systematic development of Hegel's philosophy – from the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) to the *Science of Logic* (1812, 1816), the *Philosophy of Right* (1821), and the development of spirit (subjective, objective, absolute) in the *Encyclopedia* (1817, 1827, 1830).

My central thesis is that Hegel presents us with *two* quite different models for thinking history. The first is developed in the early *Phenomenology*, when the architectonic of the system is not yet in place. Herein, history is indeed based on, generated by, and channeled into the phenomenological development by a form of “collective memory” or, as I call it, “ethical memory.” The conclusion of the *Phenomenology*, however, displays the limits of this model. Phenomenological history ends in Hegel's postrevolutionary present, while memory vanishes in the pure concept with which the *Logic* begins. In the later system, this first model is replaced by the idea that the generative forces of history are the principle of justice and the force of contradiction. Hegel introduces this second model both at the end of the *Philosophy of Right* and at the end of the philosophy of objective spirit in the *Encyclopedia*. Crucial to my argument is the claim that the move from the idea of history based on memory to the notion that history is guided by the principle of justice is made possible by the *logical foundation* of the philosophy of spirit. Significantly, the *Logic* begins when phenomenological history ends, thereby disclosing the atemporal “realm of shadows” of the pure logical forms. What are the implications of such a logical foundation for the philosophy of history? What does it mean that historical processes follow, for Hegel, the speculative-dialectical logic developed in the first sphere of the system? And what happens to memory in the *Logic*?

The argument of the book follows the intertwining of the concepts of memory, history, and justice across the different spheres of Hegel's philosophy. These concepts are the distinct threads that alternate as the protagonists of the successive chapters as they constitute their shifting systematic constellations. The process starts with the phenomenological history and the “ethical memory” of spirit in the *Phenomenology* ([Chapter 1](#)); moves through the disappearance of history and the emergence of “dialectical memory” in the atemporal development of the

Logic (Chapter 2), and leads on to the “psychological memory” and personal history of the Psychology of subjective spirit (Chapter 3). The end of objective spirit introduces world history through the principle of justice (Chapter 4); but history is then “overcome” (*aufgehoben*) in the “absolute” dimension in which spirit’s “absolute memory” takes the central stage, and history – personal history and world history – is repeated yet again, this time embodied and transfigured in the work of art, in religious representation, and in the reflection of philosophy (Chapter 5).

In what follows, by way of introduction, I pursue two objectives. On the one hand, I offer a brief outline of the contemporary debate on memory and history that frames my successive discussion of Hegel’s texts. This will bring to light the general issues that I address in this book – both the questions that I shall pose to Hegel’s texts, and the broader questions that I seek to answer with Hegel’s help. On the other hand, I sketch out a more detailed overview of my argument through the various chapters. Since I follow the intertwining of three distinct threads – the concepts of memory, history, and justice – the overview that I present here will not display a linear development, just as the complex systematics of Hegel’s philosophy does not advance in a straight line but often returns back to itself (and, just as the work of memory, consists in a multidirectional process that connects the past, the present, and the future).

1 Hegel in a discussion of historians – history and collective memory

The historian Amos Funkenstein opens the first issue of the journal *History and Memory* (1989) quoting Hegel. At stake is one of the most debated topics in the contemporary historical discussion since the 1980s: history and collective memory. “History” – maintains Hegel in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* – “combines in our language the objective as well as the subjective side. It means both *res gestae* (the things that happened) and *historia rerum gestarum* (the narration of the things that happened).”¹ Or, in another formulation, “the proper, objective history of a people (*Geschichte*) starts only at the point in which it also has a *Historie*.”² This connection, observes Funkenstein, following Hegel, is not accidental, for without memory of the past there is no history in the sense of events meaningful for the collective, events collectively experienced and of which the collective is aware. “Collective consciousness presumes collective memory,” comments Funkenstein,

“as without it there is no law and justice, no political structure, and no collective objectives. Without ‘history’ there is no history and no state.” Thus, collective memory is the condition for the constitution of the (collective) agent of history. Yet, at the same time, Funkenstein calls attention to the ambiguity of the Hegelian passage. Does Hegel’s formulation indicate that he embraces the ancient and medieval view that there is no (objective) history without the written record of history (historiography); or does he rather, perhaps, claim that objective history somehow depends – as Funkenstein puts it – on that “elusive entity known today as ‘collective memory’”? In advancing this latter hypothesis Funkenstein raises an important set of questions, which he proceeds to address, however, leaving Hegel behind once and for all. Where does collective memory reside, “how is it expressed, and how does it differ from [...] the thought about history?”³

Although Hegel is abandoned almost as soon as he surfaces in this contemporary discussion, the reference is still intriguing and worth pursuing a bit further. Indeed, while he does set the tone for Funkenstein’s reflections, Hegel remains an accidental presence in this historian’s discussion. The necessary reference when the issue of “collective memory” is invoked is obviously Maurice Halbwachs. In his seminal book, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1925), and then in the posthumous *La mémoire collective* (1950),⁴ contrasting the view that only individuals can remember and that collective memory can be, at the most, only a metaphor of dubious validity, Halbwachs famously claims that individual memory depends on, and is structured according to, the social frameworks in which all individual activity is inscribed. Collective memory is a social reality sustained and transmitted by the conscious efforts and institutions of the group. It is only to the extent that the individual is placed within a social context that she is able to recollect – and this holds true even for utterly individual and apparently private events and memories. Individuality is entirely the product of collective memory and cannot exist or have meaning without a social framework. Thus, if memory is crucial to personal identity, personal identity is necessarily built out of references to and interactions with social objects, institutions, and events. In this view, even self-consciousness is never entirely personal and individual. Accordingly, Funkenstein’s claim that collective consciousness presupposes collective memory – a position that he sees expressed in Hegel’s view of history – endorses Halbwachs’s thesis but also brings it to an interesting – indeed quite Hegelian – circle. For, on Halbwachs’s premises, collective memory requires and is grounded in the collective consciousness of the social

group. In this way, the connection between history and memory advocated by Funkenstein, once articulated at the level of social and political institutions (or at the level of Hegel's "objective spirit"), displays a clear Hegelian root.

It is well known that Halbwachs's anti-psychologistic and anti-individualistic thesis is influenced by Émile Durkheim, echoes in interesting ways his knowledge of Leibniz and is decidedly directed against Henri Bergson. At the time of their formulation, Halbwachs's views were close to revolutionary. Later, they inspired crucial works on Jewish history, and starting with the 1980s have taken center stage in the historical and social sciences debate. The philosophical underpinnings of the thesis on collective memory, however, are never investigated. And Hegel is definitely not a presence in this debate. In those rare cases in which Hegel is indeed mentioned, he is a reference so loaded with ideological ascendances and unquestioned suspicions that his specter is discarded as soon as it appears. Thus, Funkenstein maintains that Halbwachs's notion of collective memory – a notion that he nonetheless endorses – is ultimately a modernist equivalent for Hegel's "hypostatization of memory" in the form of *Geist* and even worse, of *Volksgeist*.⁵ It follows from this view that Halbwachs's "Hegelian" ascendancy needs to be abandoned once and for all.

This discussion, of which I have sketched only one very limited aspect, is the inspiration for the complex itinerary that I set out to follow in the present work. Even from a first, superficial consideration, it is clear that although Hegel's philosophy of history is today one of the least appealing parts of his system (especially in the eyes of the historians), there is still something valuable in it that is recognized in the most advanced debate among historians – a debate that otherwise seems to have nothing to share with Hegel. However, whatever it is that this discussion may consider of value in his philosophy, it is not able to withstand the general and long-standing suspicion that weighs on his idea of history. And, yet, that discussion also implicitly suggests a working hypothesis. Perhaps a way to redeem Hegel's conception of history in the eyes of today's readers is to start precisely from the connection between history and memory advanced by Funkenstein. What is memory in Hegel's philosophy, and what function does it play in his system? Does memory connect with history, and how? And what does such connection say of the resulting concept of history? These general questions lead me to examine the systematics of Hegel's philosophy throughout its different spheres looking for the "workings of memory" and the successive forms assumed by this function. As a starting point,

I raise the contemporary problem of “collective memory” and its relation to history, projecting it back on Hegel’s philosophy, turning Hegel into a direct participant in this more recent discussion, and using the concept of memory to shed a new light on his idea of history. My aim is here systematic. I suggest that Halbwachs’s fundamental notion of collective memory is in essence very Hegelian; but instead of damning the Hegelian ascendancy, as Funkenstein does, I am interested in exploring the potential of this thesis for re-thinking some important aspects and developments of Hegel’s philosophy as well as for revisiting some long-standing objections to his notion of history.⁶ I argue that the full force of Hegel’s own version of “collective memory,” that is, what I propose to call “ethical memory,” is not displayed in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* but in the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*. From this realization the starting point of this study obtains. It is first with regard to the *Phenomenology* that I re-propose Funkenstein’s questions: Where does collective memory reside, how is it expressed, how does it differ from history, and how does it relate to it?

The appeal to Hegel may help us place the discussion on new ground when we consider the other side of the contemporary debate as well, namely, the side that being critical of the notion of memory because of its ideological one-sidedness or because of its problematic relationship with the moral demands of the past pleads for abandoning it along with any strong notion of history.⁷ It has been noticed that facing postmodern deconstructions of history, the idea of collective memory appears today as old-fashioned. Freudian and Foucauldian vocabularies easily replace Halbwachs and his alleged Hegelian temptations, and rather confirm the pervasive anti-Hegelianism in matters of history.⁸ My suggestion is that a new approach to Hegel’s idea of history, through the issue of memory and the broad problematic constellation disclosed by it, may help us strengthen the response to postmodern anti-historicism, showing the value of a new alliance between memory as “ethical memory” and “spirit.” Ultimately, by re-thinking this alliance I am led to disengage history from memory, to frame both concepts anew in light of the idea of dialectical processes, and finally to link history to the idea of judgment and justice. As I show in the course of this study, Hegel’s philosophy of history is not monolithic. He presents us with *two* very different and, ultimately, truly alternative philosophical models for thinking history. My suggestion is that far from being outdated and mired in the insurmountable ideological difficulties that a long-standing interpretive tradition has raised against it, Hegel’s idea of history, if adequately articulated and

clarified in its two alternative models, can help us frame the contemporary debate in the most fruitful way.

2 Hegel's first model of history: "ethical memory" and phenomenological history

Since the terminology of memory is only of very recent introduction in the historical discourse,⁹ some work of reconstruction is needed in order to find in Hegel a parallel problematic constellation. The concept of *Erinnerung* – one of the terms that Hegel employs for memory and recollection – is ubiquitous in his system. It is accompanied by a terminological differentiation that ranges from *Gedächtnis* to *Andenken* (with references both to Plato and to Aristotle); it is often used in highly metaphorical and suggestive connections and declensions; but it also as often simply reiterates scholastic psychology and pre-Kantian views on the topic.¹⁰ In Chapters 2 and 3 I investigate, respectively, the role of what I call logical or "dialectical memory" at crucial moments of the development of the Logic and in the Psychology of subjective spirit. In [Chapter 1](#), however, before drawing to the center the mature systematics of the *Encyclopedia*, I take on a different aspect of the problem focusing on the 1807 *Phenomenology*. It is here, as I suggested above, that the debate on collective memory first leads me. At stake in this work is the famous thesis of the transformation of substance into subject, that is, into "spirit." And since spirit, in Hegel's view, is fundamentally historical, the chief thesis of the *Phenomenology* necessarily implies and requires the justification of the historicity of spirit. I argue that in this connection "collective memory" becomes crucial for Hegel in its functioning as "ethical memory." As *Erinnerung* becomes "ethical" (*sittlich*), it is responsible for channeling history within the phenomenological development transforming the phenomenology of *consciousness* into a phenomenology of *spirit* and its history. The examination of the work of memory in the *Phenomenology* shows that for Hegel memory is neither natural nor spontaneous or immediate, and does not belong originally to individual consciousness. Memory is instead an organized and collective activity channeled by social, political, and religious institutions and brought forth by a collective "we" – the "we" that constitutes the collective and intersubjective reality of spirit,¹¹ but also the philosophizing "we" that presides over the phenomenological development as a whole. I argue that it is ethical memory that is responsible for transforming substance into subject – as Hegel's programmatic claim of the Preface puts it¹² – and hence for reaching "absolute knowing" as the

conclusion of the entire phenomenological process. Throughout this process, ethical memory constitutes the structures of spirit. Ultimately, such development appears as the collective action through which the historical movement leading up to the standpoint of Hegel's historical present is re-collected and the postrevolutionary epoch is memorialized in its philosophical apprehension and in its specific intellectual "need."

Thus, the last chapter of the *Phenomenology* yields the historical standpoint of the Preface; the *Phenomenology* turns out to be the collective memory of the spirit of an age; history starts from the dimension of the present.¹³ Thereby, through collective or ethical memory, history is first introduced into a "phenomenology" of spirit. Eventually, however, memory is transformed by its passage through (phenomenological) history. It becomes purely logical memory, a merely virtual act of *Erinnerung* that, having lost its grip on history and having been surpassed by it, is the act of forgetting history altogether and of moving on into the atemporal "realm of shadows" that is the Logic.¹⁴

The claim that links ethical memory to history in introducing the reality of spirit in the *Phenomenology* frames the more general philosophical question that concerns me in this book. What is the relation between memory and history – both *Geschichte* and *Historie*? Is collective memory a product of history or is it rather its condition? Does memory bring us closer to an understanding of history or rather does it conflict with such an understanding? Does memory transform (even betray) history? And, more particularly, what is the conception of history to which Hegel's complex idea – or perhaps ideas – of memory leads? As I will argue, neither history nor memory are univocal and monolithic concepts in Hegel's philosophy. They both change their function and the way in which they operate depending on, among other things, the systematic context in which they are introduced, the presuppositions on which they rest, the subject by which they are enacted.

As Pierre Nora has extensively argued, while the link between memory and history seems, at first glance, an obvious common-sense assumption that can only be taken for granted, on closer examination the connection appears much more problematic. If we turn again to Halbwachs and the historians inspired by him, but also to an authoritative voice like Jacques Le Goff, we see that memory – and in particular collective memory – is often considered as standing in opposition to history and as alternative to it.¹⁵ Memory's contents tend to differ from those of history; siding with religion rather than with historical truth,

collective memory is often construed as ahistorical, even mythical. Accordingly, whereas Halbwachs brings to the fore the constitutive connection between personal and collective memory by rooting the former in the latter, he contrasts collective memory with “historical memory,” namely, with the reconstruction of the past by historians whose quest for historical “truth” may often deviate from accepted values and from the living consciousness of the group.

In his important book, *Zakhor. Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (1982) – the work inspired by Halbwachs that has contributed to bringing the topic of memory to the center of the debate¹⁶ – Yosef Yerushalmi shows that throughout the Middle Ages up to the sixteenth century but truly up to the nineteenth century, the Jews had a strong collective memory channeled by rituals and liturgy that supported a strong collective identity, but they had no history (no historiography or written record of history). By contrast, Jewish history starts to flourish in the wake of German historicism – and ultimately of Hegelianism, as in the case of Eduard Gans. And this happens in a moment in which Jewish collective memory and identity, conceived as the religious bond of a community, enters a period of radical crisis.¹⁷ Through Gans, himself a student of Hegel and editor of the *Philosophy of Right* (1833) after Hegel’s death, the Hegelian connection is, yet again, intriguing. As Nora aptly put it, the Jewish tradition “has no other history as its own memory, to be Jewish is to remember that one is such.”¹⁸ Nora, on the other hand, reads the separation of memory and history – the collapse of memory and its eradication by history – as the chief sign of modernity (with particular reference to France).¹⁹ But an analogous discussion can be found already in Hegel,²⁰ who opposes people with memory but no history, such as are found in Africa and Asia, to people who have attained the self-consciousness essential to history. Sharing this position and developing an interesting lesson out of Hegel, Funkenstein proposes the idea of “historical consciousness” as the mediating force between collective memory and history. It is such consciousness, he suggests, that somehow historicizes collective memory, interpreting and using it for the sake of making history. However, it seems to me that this is no conclusive answer to the problem of the connection or, alternatively, the separation of memory and history. For, the notion of historical consciousness only shifts the question to a different level. Going back to the *Phenomenology*, where is “historical consciousness” to be situated in relation, respectively, to “ethical” consciousness and to spirit’s historical reality? And where can we situate it in the later system of the *Encyclopedia*?

On first consideration, history seems for Hegel to be the exact opposite of memory. History is spirit's exteriorization and alienation, or *Entäußerung*, rather than its interiorization and re-collection or *Erinnerung*. It is spirit's exteriorization and alienation in the accidental dimensions of time, space, and existence rather than spirit's return to the depths of its own interiority, subjectivity, and self-consciousness. The opposition of history and memory, however, dialectically confirms the suspicion that the two terms are indeed necessarily and constitutively connected.²¹ In fact, the most explicit (although also the most obscure) link between memory and history appears at the very end of the *Phenomenology*, in a famous passage that is more quoted than really understood by the commentators. Hegel declares the concluding figure of the *Phenomenology* – “absolute knowing” – to be the “recollection of all the spirits” that have appeared throughout the process. Now, once the end of the process has been reached, the historical succession of these spirits is somehow frozen in a fixed image: their figures are disposed in a “gallery”²² to be finally contemplated all together, their sight disclosing the new depth of the unitary, collective picture. This is properly *Er-Innerung*. The reality that spirit has displayed throughout its phenomenological history is consigned to the virtual existence of a figure fixed in memory. Thereby, however, such a figure is also detached from history and contemplated “in-and-for-itself”: once a product of history, it has become ahistorical. Factual history (*wirkliche Geschichte*) as the contingent, often chaotic, manifestation of events is now re-organized – re-collected, as it were – in the unitary grasp of what Hegel calls “*begriffene Geschichte*,” that is, conceptual history or history apprehended in concepts.²³ Through collective memory, history finally yields the structure of the (logical) concept. “Conceptual history” is indeed memory; it displays the collective dimension of the “realm of spirits” (*Geisterreich*), although Hegel, with the help of Schiller's verses, intends it to transcend the finitude of world history, opening up to the infinite and the eternal.²⁴ In the face of the infinite, history seems to be concluded or, at least, left behind. As history is *completely* recollected, it is also finally forgotten. The new world of spirit arising as the dimension of the “present” (*Gegenwart*) is the world of a new immediacy in which spirit must start again from the very beginning “as if all that precedes were lost for it; as if it had not learned anything from the experience of past spirits.”²⁵ The historical present is disclosed in the moment the phenomenological past is left behind and forgotten. *Incipit Logica*.

3 Hegel's second model of history: world history and justice

The end of the *Phenomenology* is not the only case in which, in Hegel's philosophy, a systematic transition takes place through the connection (and the separation) of memory and history.²⁶ In the later system, at the end of the *Philosophy of Right* (1821), and at the end of the encyclopedic "objective spirit," Hegel introduces the moment of "world history (*Weltgeschichte*)" according to a different model than in 1807. Schiller is invoked again. This time, however, what interests Hegel is a very different idea than the connection between memory, history, and the infinite. The claim is now, famously: "world-history is the tribunal of the world" – *Weltgeschichte* is *Weltgericht*.²⁷ In [Chapter 4](#), I suggest that the ideas of judgment and justice offer, at this point, a different model for thinking history. Such a model replaces both the idea of collective, or ethical, memory as the basis of history, and the *Erinnerung* that closes the *Phenomenology* and from which the dimension of the historical present obtains.²⁸ After the *Phenomenology*, for Hegel history is no longer a matter of ethical memory but a matter of political (transnational) as well as "dialectical" justice. On the one hand, history cannot aim at the closure that memory allegedly provides because it necessarily and constitutively remains the open-ended field of unresolved contradictions. Confronted with memory, on the other hand, history displays a broader, although much more conflictual, universality than memory, which is, by contrast, always local and limited to a particular ethical (and national) whole. In Hegel's later philosophy the idea of history as the "court of judgment" or "tribunal" (*Weltgericht*) of the world is the dialectical correction of the shortcomings of collective or ethical memory still dominating his approach in the *Phenomenology*. Ethical memory leads only as far as the political state or, in the *Phenomenology*, once the immediacy of Greek ethical life has been surpassed and shattered by the conflicts of modernity, leads only as far as the pure logical concept in which history simply vanishes. World history requires that we overcome the limitation of memory and assume as key the idea of justice – the "concept" must internally split and become "judgment."

With this trajectory in mind, I reconstruct Hegel's position in light of a broader philosophical concern. I want to challenge the views that identify history with an alleged collective memory of humanity, and oppose the too simplistic, unproblematic connection between memory and

history – and not only on the basis of the alleged ahistorical, distorting nature of memory. The end of the *Phenomenology* shows the close dialectical connection between memory and forgetfulness. Memory produces history (and produces the phenomenological advancement and the transition to the Logic) by freezing and (selectively) forgetting the past; history, for its part, deforms and transforms memory. Indeed, historically, collective memory has often been effective largely on the basis of what it has left out or forgotten – on the basis of its constitutive one-sidedness, as Hegel would put it. Now, as Yerushalmi points out, the opposite of forgetfulness is not remembrance but justice.²⁹ In his notion of *Weltgeschichte* as *Weltgericht* Hegel goes back to the ancient idea of history as final historical judgment. It is precisely this idea that I consider worthy of being taken up again and more closely investigated. Memory, being rooted in the collective, objective dimension of spirit – but also being limited to national boundaries and traditions and being necessarily (and dialectically) associated with forgetfulness – must be overcome for history as final historical justice to be possible. Although the development of spirit finds in ethical memory a crucial turning point, it is justice and judgment, not memory that must preside over world history. Ethical memory leads to history only negatively, that is, only insofar as it is overcome (*aufgehoben*) in and by the idea of justice. Herein Hegel's gesture amounts to a secularization of the ideas of divine judgment and divine justice, which are made intrahistorical or immanent to and proper of the historical process itself. As Jan Assmann has noticed, this position should be placed in the aftermath of the early constructions of history that we find in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and ancient Israel, where the idea of a "tribunal of the dead" judging of one's individual life (before life's end) is replaced first by the idea of a worldly responsibility of the kings toward the gods and then by the Jewish notion of *historia sacra* in which God himself participates.³⁰ Now, Hegel's concept of world history transforms the idea of divine justice and judgment taking place after the end of history into the idea of an intrahistorical judgment that falls within history and eventually is identical with its movement. The tribunal of justice is now history itself.

Hegel's turn to a new idea of history based on and guided by the principle of justice is made possible by the logical foundation of history and, more generally, by the foundation of the philosophy of spirit in his Logic. For, ultimately, historical justice is the judgment of the concept. After the *Phenomenology*, Hegel conceives of the system of philosophy as based on the new dialectic-speculative Logic and its "absolute method." It follows that in order to understand the transformation

that connects the two poles, leading from the early phenomenological model of history based on ethical memory (Chapter 1) to the later model connecting history to universal justice (Chapter 4), and to better understand what, exactly, historical justice is for Hegel, two steps must be undertaken. First, we need to address the question of what happens to memory, history, and their relation after the end of the *Phenomenology*, when the Logic begins (and in order for the Logic to begin). This occupies the argument of Chapter 2. Then, in Chapter 3, I turn to the thematic occurrence of memory in the Psychology of subjective spirit, in which memory becomes subjective and personal and history emerges in the abstract and contingent form of personal history – a form of history that has no truth, yet is nonetheless the beginning of spirit's freedom. Significantly, memory is the first, fundamental step in the process that – liberating theoretical thinking and leading it to its practical activity – introduces the sphere of objective freedom. Herein we meet Halbwachs's thesis again: the mere subjectivity of personal history is now connected with the collective memory of ethical life. This time, however, this connection is no longer the basis of world history.

4 Spirit's memories: dialectical, psychological, and absolute memory

In Chapter 2 I show that while history seems to have vanished in the “realm of shadows” that is the pure, immanent development of the concept, memory is here fully present and operative as “dialectical memory.” *Erinnerung* is now a specific form of development of the logical process and is closely related to the function of dialectical *Aufhebung*. Eventually, at the end of the Logic, dialectical memory connects with the movement of the “absolute method.” On Hegel's account, there are three “moments” of the method: the beginning, the advancement, and the end. They indicate the formal, pure structure of all dialectical process as such, the structure that is common to processes belonging to nature, the individual mind, society, political institutions, and history. The logical method is both the method of thinking and of knowing any specific real object, and the modality according to which specific processes immanently unfold. Since all successive systematic spheres presuppose the Logic and the logical method herein presented, the question is: how does the logical foundation of history shape and orient Hegel's idea of world history – both its systematics, namely, its controversial placement at the end of the *Philosophy of Right* (or the philosophy

of objective spirit), and the very notion of historical process? I maintain that it is precisely its logical foundation that confers to Hegel's idea of history its most innovative features in relation to the notions of "universal history" proposed by many of his contemporaries (Kant, Fichte, Schelling, for example). It is the connection with the Logic that allows Hegel to separate history from memory (from its one-sidedness and its mythologizing tendency, among other things) and to confer upon it the validity of "truth."

I contend that the gesture that grounds the movement of history on the dialectical method allows Hegel, first, to transform the traditional metaphysical or alternatively mythical problem of the static, ahistorical "origins" of history (the Absolute, the Garden of Eden, the Golden Age, etc.) which still occupies Schelling, for example, into the intrahistorical problem of the dynamic "beginning" of historical processes and epochs. Second, it allows Hegel to transform the teleological and eschatological problem of a final "end" of history beyond history (the *Himmelreich*, the *Civitas Dei*, Perpetual Peace, etc.) into the intrahistorical issue of the conclusion of a determinate historical epoch from which the transition to a new shape of the world is made; but also, systematically, into the problem of the end of the philosophy of objective spirit. In this regard, the (systematic) "end" of history is the transition to the sphere of "absolute spirit." In both cases, the problem of historical *periodization* and the dynamic issue of intrahistorical *genesis* replace the metaphysical problems at the center of traditional philosophies of history. To recognize Hegel's distance from the latter is so important because one of the most often-repeated objections to his idea of history regards its alleged teleologism (or providentialism), while the mystification implied in the quest for origins and final ends is the preferred target of so many historians' opposition to the philosophy of history as such.³¹ Finally, I claim that the central issue of Hegel's philosophy of history is the understanding of how history *advances*. The answer to this question is offered by the logical principle of dialectical contradiction and negativity once this principle is seen at work in the reality of history. Hegel's idea that world history is based not on ethical memory but on the principle of justice results precisely from the logical foundation of history which brings to light the fundamental connection between "advancement" (logical-methodological and historical), contradiction, and judgment. World history is the movement of the "split" – the *Ur-Teilung* – and negativity that characterizes judgment. Now, it is the dialectic of judgment that informs Hegel's idea of historical justice and dictates the placement of history at the end of the philosophy of objective spirit: world history is

the *Ur-Teilung* or “original partition” of the concept of the state in which ethical life culminates. The far-reaching consequences of this thesis can be appreciated when Hegel’s position is connected both to Heraclitus (the famous fragment, “War is common and conflict is justice”) and, on our contemporary scene, to Stuart Hampshire’s conflictual model of rationality and his idea of “procedural justice.” This is the thread that connects [Chapter 2](#) and [Chapter 4](#).

After having examined the workings of *Erinnerung* in the disembodied, atemporal shadowy realm of the Logic – from the “pure being” of the beginning to the “absolute method” of the end through the memory of being that characterizes the sphere of “essence” as the logical past of being – in [Chapter 3](#) I turn to Hegel’s thematic examination of “memory” (*Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis*) in the Psychology of subjective spirit. Herein we encounter the properly “psychological,” subjective memory along with the “dialectical” memory of the Logic, which is in charge of methodologically articulating the movement of “theoretical intelligence.” The complex development that connects the two memories of subjective spirit is responsible for liberating theoretical intelligence to free thought thereby constituting spirit into “subject.” Memory is the guiding function of the process that, leading from intuition to representation to thought, first establishes “spirit” in its true and free subjectivity (in contrast to the “soul” of the Anthropology and the “consciousness” of the Phenomenology). The subject is spirit that *re-collecting* itself from the givenness of the world is now able to tell her personal story, thereby for the first time positing herself as subject. Herein we find the beginning of (subjective) history as the very capacity of narrating events that have the subject at the center and are reclaimed as her own.³² However, we know from the *Phenomenology* (and from Halbwachs) that personal memory is meaningful only within the collective, social context of ethical life. Personal memory and its stories presuppose ethical memory and are made possible by it. And yet, as claimed above, within the sphere of objective spirit, ethical memory and world history remain separate, their tension unresolved. The former is confined within the limits of the state, of its culture, language, and institutions; the latter expands to gain a universal dimension, albeit in the field of open-ended, unresolved contradictions, contingency, and conflicts. But in Hegel’s philosophy this is not the end of the complex vicissitude that sees memory and history alternatively intertwined, crossing paths, and separating again. The continuation of this story is the issue that the argument connecting Chapters 3 and 4 leaves for the last chapter of the book to tell.

In Chapter 5 I propose to read the transition from world history to absolute spirit and the articulation of the forms of absolute spirit (art, religion, philosophy) in terms of what I call spirit's "absolute memory." The systematic succession from "world history" as the last moment of objective spirit to "absolute spirit" is, I contend, the result of spirit's *last recollection*. Coming (systematically) *after* history, yet being *immanent in* history, such recollection requires spirit to give reality to its absolute self-knowledge. The work of memory now shapes the productions of art, religion, and philosophy. Significantly, the articulation of these moments by absolute memory repeats the sequence of intuition (art), representation (religion), and thinking (philosophy) first introduced by dialectical memory at the level of subjective spirit. Spirit's absolute memory eventually reconciles the personal and the collective, the subjective and the objective, the time-dependent and the eternal dimensions of spirit. As the memory of the contradictions of world history, absolute memory re-frames such contradictions in a different medium or "element." It is true that it does not solve them in reality (its function is not political); but it offers to consciousness (individual and collective) a different, alternative way of living the contradictions of history, and a different way of thinking and living with them. This is precisely the function of art, religion, and philosophy. With regard to the historical reality that they assume as their object (doing so more or less intentionally and directly), the memory that they enact comes always "too late," as Hegel famously claims with regard to philosophy.³³ However, their value as forms of absolute spirit is the value of what is eternal and yet in history.

The far-reaching implications of my reading of the function of art, religion, and philosophy in terms of spirit's absolute memory become clear once this interpretation is connected to the contemporary discussion, and the absolute memory embodied in the artwork, in religious representation, and in philosophical thinking is related to Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire*.³⁴ After memory and history have parted ways (that is, for Hegel, after the French Revolution and after the *Phenomenology*) the memorializing function of the forms of absolute spirit is not to call back the past or to reconstruct it within a national tradition but to create a living and plural (and concretely universal) mediated representation of it in the dimension of the present. In fact, such representation is a new reality that is itself changing and developing as it constantly generates new meanings and interpretations. However, unlike Nora's *lieux de mémoire*, the memorializing productions of Hegel's absolute spirit are neither directly social or political institutions, nor are they

empty symbols or natural objects all tied to a national tradition; they are instead cultural artifacts with a universal and global, yet concretely individual, significance and actual reality, a reality that traverses the realms of nature, of individual existence, of intersubjective practices, but which is also always beyond them. Spirit's absoluteness is the "site" of its ultimate memory – the site that is gained, systematically, after the events of history have been displayed, and for this reason is able to re-collect them in the unity of a thoroughly new perspective.

5 Overview

Let me sum up this itinerary. By following the complex connection between memory and history in Hegel's philosophy – their convergence and separation and their final intertwining – I propose an articulation of the concept of memory-*Erinnerung* that goes from the "ethical memory" of the *Phenomenology*, to the logical or "dialectical memory" of the *Logic*, to the "psychological memory" that is the beginning of personal history and presupposes the "collective memory" of the ethical whole, to the conclusive "absolute memory" consigned to the works of art, religion, and philosophy. The argument of this book crystallizes around two models for thinking history: it goes from the connection of collective or "ethical memory" and history – which constitutes the historical reality of spirit in the *Phenomenology* and eventually leads to their separation at the end of the work (Chapter 1) – to Hegel's mature idea of history that concludes the *Philosophy of Right* (1821) and the development of objective spirit in the *Encyclopedia* (Chapter 4). The later model, having accepted the separation of memory and history proper of modernity, sees in the idea of justice the guiding principle of world history. These are the two different models of history that Hegel proposes – different, in the first place, with regard to the foundational and generative principle of that which counts as *historical development*: ethical memory in 1807, the principle of justice and the logic of contradiction in the later system. Crucial to explaining the move from the first to the second conception of history is the methodological role that memory as "dialectical memory" plays in the *Logic* (Chapter 2), and the new convergence of dialectical memory, psychological memory, and personal history in the *Psychology of subjective spirit* (Chapter 3). The itinerary is concluded with the "absolute memory" of spirit manifested in the creations of art, in the representations of religion, and in the works of philosophy – these are spirit's *lieux de mémoire* and the result of spirit's last recollection (Chapter 5).

Some readers may be puzzled by the fact that the texts that I consider are not the usual texts generally discussed by the literature when at stake is Hegel's conception of history. Indeed, I make reference to the (posthumous) *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* only in order to illustrate points made with regard to Hegel's published texts. The reason for this is that the perspective that I articulate in this book by discussing Hegel's idea of history is systematic. I am interested in the *systematic* problems raised by the idea of history in the context of Hegel's dialectic-speculative philosophy. What is it that makes a development properly historical? What is the basis and what the justification of Hegel's claim that "spirit" is a fundamentally historical reality (a claim that far too often is taken for granted as a sort of "postulate" of Hegelianism)? What determines the systematic position that Hegel assigns to "world history," namely, its being placed at the end of the philosophy of "objective spirit" or the *Philosophy of Right*, after the discussion of international right, and as the point of transition to "absolute spirit"? To what extent does this systematic position influence and shape Hegel's idea of world history? At stake, for example, is the claim that the political state (not the *Volk* and not the individual) is the proper subject of history; and Hegel's problematic suggestion that history is allegedly "overcome" (in an act of dialectical *Aufhebung*) in an "absolute" dimension above and beyond history when, on the other hand, art, religion, and philosophy as forms of absolute spirit are in history and do have their own history.

In addition to the systematic perspective, the reason I focus on the *Phenomenology*, the *Science of Logic*, and the *Encyclopedia*, granting to the *Lectures* a secondary role, is my drawing to the center the connection between history and memory insofar as this issue is taken precisely from the post-Hegelian debate. In so doing, I revisit Hegel's idea of history from an entirely new and fresh angle so as to indirectly test the tenability and fruitfulness of the traditional objections raised against it. This latter debate is only obliquely addressed. I believe, however, that in the end the reader will be able to easily draw conclusions in this regard based on the sustained argument that I propose.

While these reasons justify my discussion of Hegel's Logic in connection with the topic of memory and history, one of the central points of my argument – and one of the most innovative and, perhaps, controversial – is my reclaiming the centrality of Hegel's gesture whereby history, systematically, as a concept belonging to the philosophy of spirit (and both as *historia rerum gestarum* and as *res gestae*) is based on the Logic. Instead of opposing logic and history, and instead of viewing the idea of a logical ground of history as a de-historization or even outright

elimination of history (at the expense of its forceful rationalization),³⁵ I suggest that the most modern and valuable (and least metaphysical) aspects of Hegel's view of history derive precisely from his anchoring of the historical process in the dialectical structures of the *Logic*. As mentioned above, this leads Hegel, among other things, to replace the metaphysical or mythical search for origins with the issue of the beginning and dynamic genesis of historical processes; to replace eschatological ideas of a final end of history with the systematic issue of the end of the system of philosophy; and to recognize the inevitable open-endedness and always conflicted nature of historical processes.

1

History and Memory in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*

The first chapter of this study is dedicated to the connection between memory and history in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, that is, in the early work at the time of which the later structure of the philosophical system is not yet in place. In developing this topic, I propose a reading of Hegel's 1807 work as itself a "work of (philosophical) memory." I shall proceed by analyzing the turning points of the *Phenomenology* in which the problem of history is channeled into the phenomenological development in a way that forces Hegel to re-think the entire structure of the process. I discuss, in turn, the preface to the entire work, the chapter (BB) *Der Geist*, the chapter (CC) *Die Religion*, and the conclusion of (DD) *Das absolute Wissen*. In all these turning points Hegel re-organizes the phenomenological process according to radically new criteria so that the entire course and plan of the book take on a different shape. I argue that these radical changes are produced by the intervention of (phenomenological) *Erinnerung* and by the interaction between memory and the issues posed by the concept of history. The crucial question here regards the transformation of the phenomenological movement – the logical, diachronic succession of consciousness's experiences – into a historical sequence. What is required, on the philosophical, conceptual, and systematic level, in order to stage a movement as specifically *historical*? What is history and who/what is its subject?

I propose to recognize the issue of memory as present in the *Phenomenology* at two distinct, yet interacting levels. On the one hand, Hegel tackles the problem of memory as a specific content or figure in the phenomenological development. But on the other hand, and this is my original and central point, I claim that the *Phenomenology* works on the basis of its textual "internal memory," namely, on the basis of a web of internal recollections and cross references that are responsible for the

advancement of the process. The *Phenomenology* is, in this perspective, itself the work of memory. According to a long-standing historical tradition memory is the itinerary of self-transformation that is connected with the creation of “memorable” texts. Here, I attempt a reading of Hegel’s 1807 book as a paradigmatic example of this tradition. It will become clear in the successive chapters how memory, dialectically understood, is the force at work successively in the Logic and in the philosophy of spirit; it is the immanent method that structures from within the very activity of philosophizing.

1 Figures of memory: substance becoming subject – preface

Placing the book in Hegel’s historical present, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* opens with an appeal to *Erinnerung* and closes, in the chapter on Absolute Knowing, by instituting the connection between memory and history in its different declinations (phenomenical, or factual history, and “conceptual history”). The circularity of the work – and the simple fact that the preface was written immediately after the conclusion of its last chapter – only reinforces the importance of this finding. In between the two (acts of) *Erinnerung(en)* lies the unfolding of the phenomenological development through which consciousness is led to the highest level of absolute knowing. “Spirit” (*Geist*), in the proper sense that introduces this structure in the homonymous chapter, appears as a fundamental station in this movement. With spirit, history emerges thematically before the conclusion of the process, midway through it, and radically changes the nature of the development. The appearance of history is a problematic break both in the phenomenological narrative and in consciousness’s experience. The issue of whether, and up to what point, Hegel’s 1807 work follows a unitary plan has often been raised, much debated, but not definitely solved.¹ Although it is not my direct concern here, that issue is related to the two questions that I want raise. First, how is history thematically channeled into the phenomenological process? Hegel’s claim that spirit is a fundamentally historical reality is not the assumption on which the *Phenomenology* is based, but rather its demonstrative outcome. In other words, Hegel can claim that spirit is constitutively historical only to the extent that the phenomenological process succeeds in integrating history in the movement of self-consciousness (or, alternatively, only to the extent that the phenomenology succeeds in becoming a true philosophy of history). The second question is related to the first. Assuming Hegel’s famous

claim of the preface – the crucial point is “to comprehend and express the true not as substance but also as subject”² – as an adequate description of the general program of the *Phenomenology*, and granting that the concept of *Geist* is Hegel’s solution to the transformation of substance into subject, what is the role that memory plays in this process?

I want to suggest that key to both questions is the concept of “figure” (*Gestalt*) and the process of “figuration” (*Gestaltung*) and the use that the *Phenomenology* makes of them. The idea of “figure” is both the means that Hegel employs in order to channel history into the development of consciousness and the mediating structure that allows substance to become subject. Now, *Gestalt* is the product of the workings of memory and its concrete expression – it is the concrete manifestation of the “internal memory” of the work. *Gestalt* is the mediating link between substance and subject insofar as memory becomes, in turn, what I shall call “ethical memory.” In order to lead on to history and spirit, memory must lose its individual, merely psychological or consciousness-based character, become itself collective memory, and thereby anchor individuality within the ethical substance. Ethical memory transforms the “figures of consciousness” into “figures of a world,” transforming consciousness into the “historical consciousness” that operates within the structures of the ethical world. At this juncture, the phenomenology of consciousness becomes a (phenomenological) philosophy of history.

In the preface, taking on the standpoint of the present postrevolutionary age, Hegel outlines the task to be accomplished with regard to the foundation of “science” in terms of the “beginning of the new spirit.”³ The task mirrors, or indeed voices, the “need” of the time as a time of fundamental transition to a new era, and is framed by a definite conception of what spirit is. Opposing both the romantic notion of a substantial “depth” that is only promised but cannot be discursively proved nor investigated (and is consequently “empty” or merely “superficial”) and the modern and Kantian view of an “extension”⁴ that is sheer manifold, finite, and ineffectual existence (and consequently must be synthetically gathered by an intervening, external “I think” in order to be meaningful), Hegel maintains that “the power of spirit is only as great as its expression and externalization (*Äußerung*), its depth only as deep as it dares to spread out and lose itself in its exposition (*Auslegung*).”⁵ In this way, Hegel already outlines the double movement of memory: *Er-Innerung* – the exploration of spirit’s depth – depends on *Ent-Äußerung* – the spreading out in space and time – and vice versa. What spirit effectually is, at the same time its reality and power, can be

measured only by its actual manifestation (or by its *having been* manifested) in the manifold contingency of history. It is only the discursive act or rather the ongoing process of "exposition" (*Auslegung*) – staged from now on by the *Phenomenology* – that can put to the test what spirit really is and has the power to be and to do. It is only spirit's actual spreading out (and no empty or dogmatic promise of a content) that can be finally recollected to constitute its own "depth." The past is thereby the sign and proof of the force of the present. At this point, however, Hegel reveals that this program is somehow time-sensitive, as it is formulated in, and indeed made possible by, a very specific occurrence in history. "It is not difficult to see" – announces Hegel, clearly addressing his contemporaries – "that our time is a time of birth and transition to a new era. Spirit has broken with the world it has hitherto inhabited and represented and it is ready to submerge it into the past."⁶ The French Revolution has plunged an old organization (or figure) of the life of spirit into the past, rejecting all connection to it so that the problem is now to envision the contours or the "figure" that the new epoch will henceforth take. But to find oneself at the onset of a new epoch – just as to find oneself at the beginning of science – means that one can count only on memory to proceed forward, since all habitual orientation points have vanished.⁷ And yet, significantly, as spirit's reality has become a moment of the past, memory is not called upon to institute that past again, but rather to move on to a new "figure," to a new *Auslegung*, and to new meanings. *Pace* Aristotle, memory seems to be, for Hegel, more of the future or of the present than of the past. Memory is activated in order to proceed toward the future once the past is declared concluded and, indeed, forever consumed, hence, if anything, something to be forgotten.⁸

Despite its abrupt emergence, "the beginning of the new spirit" – explains Hegel – "is the product of a widespread upheaval in various forms of culture." The beginning "is the whole, which having traversed its content in time and space has returned to itself, and is the resultant simple concept of the whole. But the *actuality* of this simple whole consists in this, *that those various figures which have become its moments will now develop and take figure again*, this time in their new element, *in their newly acquired meaning*."⁹ This is how history develops when viewed from the standpoint of the present immediately after the revolutionary upheaval. But, in addition, the passage gives us Hegel's transformation of an epochal starting point into the philosophical starting point of the reconstruction efforts of the *Phenomenology*. This is the beginning of the phenomenological recollection – a recollection that

will take place at the end of the work; but it is also, more properly, the beginning of a process that has already taken place. What we have at the beginning – at the beginning of science and at the beginning of the new era – is the “whole,” that same whole that for Hegel constitutes the “truth”; the same truth that ought to be expressed and exposed “not as substance but at the same time as subject.”¹⁰ The whole, however, belongs to the past; in the beginning, it is truly always a result: it *has become* a totality by traversing the succession of time and by occupying the extension of space, and it has then sunk into itself, thereby closing an epoch of its development. Thus, what we have now, at the beginning, is not the *reality* of this whole – a reality made of time and space and contingent existence – but (only) its “simple concept” – a somehow virtual existence, its having been (in time and space). In fact, Hegel underlines how the whole is now “present in *Erinnerung*.”¹¹ In memory it has a merely virtual, abstract reality. The “actual reality” of this whole is a matter of the present. To call the *new* (not the old) into existence is the task of phenomenological recollection. For, actual reality, explains Hegel, is the process in which the independent “figures” that have been reduced to “moments” of the conclusive whole gain, yet again, the status of “figures,” this time becoming new figures of a new reality, thereby displaying a new meaning and constituting a new whole. Thus, memory is responsible for reviving the past or the conceptual “moment” as the “figure” of a new organization of reality, (dis)placing it in(to) a different space and in(to) a different time. Thereby memory shapes the present generating the beginning of a new story. The “figure” is the structural unity or the subject of the phenomenological development. The “moments,” that is, the constitutive elements of a whole that are real only within their whole, are integrated into this development insofar as “they give themselves again [...] a figure.” This connection is announced as the motor of the phenomenological development, which is presented as the process of consciousness’s successive “figuration” (*Gestaltung*).

It is precisely the way in which the structural difference between *Gestalt* and *Moment* plays itself out at the intersection of memory and history that interests me here. But first, briefly, a few considerations on the term *Gestalt*, whose use is abundant in the *Phenomenology* as in no other Hegelian work.¹² The notion of *Gestalt* and the process of *Gestaltung* bring together the two semantic fields that the end of the work announces as the forms of alienation of the concept, namely, nature and history, space and time. Goethe is responsible for promoting the concept of *Gestalt* (already used by Kant and then by Schiller in the

aesthetic sense displayed by the “human figure” and its ideal character) to the central notion of his philosophy of nature, in particular of his “morphology.” For Goethe the term expresses the *dynamic* character of a natural structure; it is closely connected to the process of *Bildung* or formation, and it indicates the internal transformation of an individual understood as an organic part of the totality to which it belongs. Figure is the “function” of an individual existence that indicates its formative activity within a whole; *Gestaltung* is the individualization and internal articulation of an organic totality. But as rendering of the Latin *figura*, *Gestalt* bears a meaning connected to the eschatological interpretation of history. As Erich Auerbach shows in his fundamental work on Dante (significantly mentioning Hegel in his discussion), a “figural interpretation” of history directly refers every earthly event or phenomenon as earthly “figure” to the divine plan that finally fulfills (or “realizes”) this figure in the overall providential order. Although the earthly “figure” has its meaning only in its heavenly “fulfillment,” it is nonetheless historically real: its reality is not lost in the abstraction of allegory or symbolism. The reality of *figura* is underscored by Luther (an important reference for Hegel), who renders Tertullian’s Latin with “*gestallt*.” With this term Luther opposes Zwingli’s symbolic and allegoric interpretations of the notion that “Christ’s body is in *gestallt* of bread.”¹³ For Luther the figure of bread indicates the real, sensible presence of Christ’s body. Both references – Goethe’s morphology and the figural interpretation of history – should be kept in mind when dealing with the role that the notion of *Gestalt* and its connection with memory plays in the development of the *Phenomenology*. At stake is the dynamism of a process in which individuality is constituted as the function of an organic totality, and in which, conversely, the totality becomes self-conscious through its articulation in individuals. This is the structure of Hegel’s ethical whole, the structure of *Sittlichkeit*. Herein, memory becomes ethical and substance becomes subject.

2 Geometries of memory: “ethical memory” and history – (BB) *Der Geist*

While in the first five chapters of the *Phenomenology* history is an implicit presence in the development that follows consciousness to self-consciousness to reason – a phenomenological “cycle” that by and large has an epistemological significance – with the appearance of “spirit” (*Geist*) history comes thematically to the fore, introducing what a great interpreter of the *Phenomenology* has called the “historiographical cycle”

of the book. As this interpreter provocatively puts it, in the chapter *Geist* “we no longer have a phenomenology and not even a philosophy of spirit but a true philosophy of history in which events primarily of social and political nature are translated into concepts.”¹⁴ Furthermore, this philosophy of history phenomenologically structured is a practical philosophy. As history emerges as the protagonist of spirit’s vicissitudes, Hegel is forced to re-think the entire organization of the work in order to move on in his narrative. In the first pages of the chapter, we pause to consider what has been achieved so far and the extent to which these results are bound to modify the successive development. The “internal memory” of the book is here at work. My claim is that the turning point of the new historical constellation of phenomenological figures disclosed by spirit is the constitution of memory as “collective” or “ethical memory.” Unlike the development followed so far, the figures of spirit are instituted by a memory that is collective or by a recollection enacted by the intersubjective, ethical “we.” Such figures, announces Hegel, are no longer just “*Gestalten des Bewußtseins*”; they are now “*Gestalten einer Welt*” – the shift goes from the figures of consciousness to the figures of manifold historical worlds. It is the historical and collective context of such “worlds” in which individual consciousness is from now on necessarily rooted. The psychological and phenomenological self is meaningful only within a social recollection process that, on the basis of the way in which it is carried on, is fundamentally historical.

Considered from the side of substance, the “spiritual essence” that results from the development of “reason” is “ethical substance” (*sittliche Substanz*). *Geist*, however, is “the ethical actuality” (*die sittliche Wirklichkeit*),¹⁵ that is, not just substance but substance that has become effectual. A movement from “being” to “essence” and from essence to “actuality” has taken place – a double transition that, as the Logic will teach us, is primarily a movement of *Erinnerung*. Since spirit is essence animated through the activity of the self – not “dead essence,” Hegel remarks, but “essence that is actual and alive” – it is “being that has been dissolved into the self.”¹⁶ Thereby, spirit is presented as the absolutely independent and real essence, the essence or substance that sustains and “carries itself,” that is, essence or substance becoming subject. At this point, the philosopher “we” pauses for a brief recollection of the preceding movement,¹⁷ which appears now in its truth but also as displaying a quite different form than the one it has heretofore presented. To recollect the past process means to change its structure radically. Looking back, it is now clear that spirit is the basis or the

anchor that has been supporting the development of the preceding figures all along. If they are indeed something (for us and in themselves), or better if they have been at all, it is only due to the underlying reality of spirit from which they were abstracted. "All previous *figures* of consciousness are abstractions [of spirit]. This is what they are: spirit that analyzes itself, distinguishes its *moments*, and dwells for a while with each of them."¹⁸ Since spirit is, as we shall see, a collective, ethical reality, the movement goes from collective to individual consciousness, which means that it is the opposite of the process that in the immanent phenomenological development seems to have led from consciousness to spirit itself. The movement is an *Erinnerung* of spirit. What until now appeared as the progression of consciousness's figures, is in truth the act of spirit's recollection of itself into itself. An act of collective memory retrospectively analyzing the whole, abstracting from specific contexts, and dwelling on its single stations, reveals that the "figures of consciousness" are "moments" of spirit's own reality. In the figural history staged by the *Phenomenology*, spirit is the *fulfillment* of consciousness's figures – not a transcendent fulfillment but their true historical realization. Figures have reality and indeed "existence" only to the extent that they belong to spirit as its moments. And, yet, since the figures of consciousness are moments of spirit, their reality (*before* the emergence of spirit) is only "*Schein*," an unreal and seemingly ahistorical abstraction. They are but "*verschwindende Größen*,"¹⁹ the vanishing quantities of infinitesimal calculus (which is what "moment" technically means). Only spirit's memory, or *Erinnerung*, can contain, and give permanence to, that vanishing. Significantly, what gives permanence and substantiality to the vanishing past is not an ontological substrate but the re-collective movement that indicates the historical origin of the past figures-moments by retracing the process of their genesis. Curiously, however, this act of memory has two quite different meanings. On the one hand, it does lend existence and reality to the figures-moments of consciousness as it establishes them retrospectively in their essence or "ground"; but on the other hand, if viewed from the present standpoint of spirit, the act of memory reveals the partiality and one-sidedness of each isolated moment and therefore justifies the need to forget and move on to new forms of life and to new figures. As "*Auflösung*" of the moments, memory sets them free and allows spirit to start its process of *Gestaltung* all over again. The memorializing resolution of the past in its moments is its existential dissolution and its historical absolution. This is precisely the condition that allows history to join the phenomenological development and to begin a new process.

Thus, when taken up in spirit's recollection, the preceding succession of figures of consciousness (Consciousness, Self-consciousness, Reason) gives rise to the following picture: "[S]pirit is consciousness in general, which embraces sense certainty, perception, and the understanding, insofar as in its self-analysis spirit holds fast to the moment of being an objectively existent actuality to itself, and ignores the fact that this actuality is its own being-for-self. If, on the contrary, it holds fast to the other moment of the analysis, namely, that its object is its own being-for-self, then it is self-consciousness."²⁰ The succession of figures that we have followed in the first five chapters of the *Phenomenology* is by no means a history, and properly not even a succession. Not, at least, until spirit remembers it. But when spirit remembers it, the sequence is fundamentally changed and a new process begins. In its (self-) recollection, spirit reveals that all the preceding figures were only abstract, partial, and one-sided aspects of its own reality – consciousness is spirit ignoring the actuality of its own self; self-consciousness is spirit ignoring its own objectivity. History emerges when the figural meaning of consciousness is fulfilled by the reflective act of spirit, that is, by the act of re-collecting all its partial moments into the unity that is spirit itself. Such fulfillment, however, is in turn the beginning of a new figurative process the protagonist of which, this time, is spirit in its accomplished reality. The idea of historical realization or actualization is now called into the picture. Freed from its relation to the preceding moments (memory is liberation), spirit gains a new forward-looking definition: in its "immediate truth" spirit is "the ethical life of a people." This definition frames from now on the articulation of spirit as the subject of history. It is individuality that must progress to the consciousness of its unity with ethical life, thereby breaking the harmony of its immediate bond with it and gaining consciousness of itself. From this starting point, the itinerary develops throughout a "series of figures." However, Hegel marks a fundamental difference between the *Gestaltung* process of consciousness and that of spirit. The latter's figures "are distinguished from the previous ones by the fact that they are real spirits, actualities in the strict sense, and instead of being figures merely of consciousness are figures of a world."²¹ Spirit gives itself figure as a collective, historical reality. First, spirit's figures are *real in themselves*; they are real spirits with a proper, actual reality (as opposed to the figures of consciousness that are real only insofar as they are recollected by spirit and grounded in the unity of such recollection as moments – at which point, however, they only have the *Schein* of reality, not true reality). Unlike consciousness's figures,

spirit's figures are real because they are historical; their reality is their "historicity." Second, they are a *collective* reality that instantiates and expresses collective life and collective memory. They are not simply figures of consciousness but figures of a world – of the historical and ethical community in which consciousness is always already inscribed. We have reached the "Halbwachsian" moment of the *Phenomenology* – the place where Hegel comes closest to Maurice Halbwachs's concept of "collective memory."

But how does the collective or ethical memory of spirit function in constructing the succession of the historical figures of its world? The constitution of *Sittlichkeit* is the process of its *Gestaltung*, in which individuality and universality are mediated with each other – the former gaining its necessity within the whole; the latter acquiring lived concreteness when enacted by the individual. Significantly, the process of *Gestaltung* is close to that of *Bildung* – logically as well as historically figuration is formation and culture. The figuration process of the sphere of ethical life offers the paradigmatic example of the workings of collective memory. To become ethical, that is, to gain true reality as figure of spirit's historical development, memory must abandon its merely psychological, individual, and accidental character and reach its "higher determination" in the "common essence" (*Gemeinwesen*).²² The ethical substance provides the contents and the goals of the individual's activity, thereby liberating it from the contingencies of natural life and universalizing it. *Erinnerung* – as recollection and as the movement of *Insichgehen* – is the synthetic apprehension of a manifold content that is unified into a concluded whole to which meaning can be attributed retrospectively. This is the process of figuration and the movement through which the structure of the figure is attained. Memory does not take up its contents as a found given (Hegel will clarify this point at length in the Psychology of subjective spirit);²³ rather, memory first institutes those contents in the moment in which it recollects it. In other words, dialectically, the recollected contents follow the act of recollection as its result, and do not precede them as presupposition. Memory unifies a scattered manifold giving to it the shape of a discrete event, the figure of something concluded and meaningful, lending to it the form of the past – *ge-wesen*.²⁴ Memory is memory of the dead; it is the force that preserves and gives subsistence and meaning to what would otherwise be condemned to destruction – to the destruction of nature and to the destruction of time and forgetfulness. And, yet, it is memory that first declares the dead as dead and sanctions the past as past in order to make it live on in the community and as the spirit of

the community. It is memory that cuts out the shape of the meaningful event from the indifferent flux of existence declaring it dead and past, yet worthy of collective remembrance, that is, of life in a new context. Memory is a power of transformation: it transforms natural death into ethical death; it turns an event which merely happens within the chain of causes and effects into something brought forth by consciousness, hence into a historical event. Memory is "ethical" insofar as the dead is no longer a natural and contingent existence but the individualized figure in which the community becomes conscious of its own historical conflicts. Ethical is the memory that gives historical reality and significance – and hence historical fulfillment – to the contingency of individual existence by re-inscribing it into the broader collective context in which such existence becomes ethical life. Thus, in the figure created by memory the "unrest" (*Unruhe*) of contingent life is brought to the quiet "rest" (*Ruhe*) of a simple universality – the universality of death and the universality of the ethical or religious community.²⁵ The memorialized figure produced by collective memory is the snapshot in which spirit gives itself historical reality: it is the permanent quiet image portraying the fleeting unrest of life as something that has been in the past, and yet it allows the community to exist meaningfully in the present. Paradoxically, historical consciousness is gained by the ahistorical act of fixing the flux of change within the contours of an immutable "figure." However, as Goethe rightly perceives, it is precisely in the structure of *Gestalt* that the dynamism of life and transformation is inscribed and rendered, as it were, internal to the (social) organism itself – figuration is *Er-Innerung* in the most proper sense of interiorization. At the end of the *Phenomenology* a final act of *Erinnerung* will re-organize the complete series of these memorialized figures – the series of the real spirits – in a "gallery of images" to be finally contemplated synoptically together.²⁶

It is significant that the figure of individual death and its relationship to (and significance for) the community marks for Hegel the crucial moments of the phenomenological and historical development of spirit. From Antigone's conflict with Creon over her dead brother's body in Greek ethical life, through the unmediated "meaningless death" inflicted upon the anonymous individual in the revolutionary Terror,²⁷ to the "death of the divine man"²⁸ and its transmutation as an expression of the universal life of spirit in the religious community of the Christian world.²⁹ Common to all these cases is the work of *Erinnerung*, the inward figurative movement of spirit that recuperates its own depths from the alienating experience of destruction and death,

thereby cementing the inner life of the community or, alternatively, bringing to light its deepest conflicts and crises.³⁰

To sum up this first turning point in the *Phenomenology's* "internal memory," we can say that in shaping the connection between individuality and ethical substance into its figures, ethical memory discloses for the first time the historical reality of spirit. Thereby it accomplishes the mediation of substance into subject. First, memory interrupts the mechanical or accidental course of natural events lending to them social and historical significance; second, it gives them the imprint of consciousness's free activity; and, finally, it saves the event from the destruction and dissolution of time and death by giving it memorialized form. At this point, we meet the interesting dialectical twist of Hegel's argument. In sinking an event (or an individual existence) into the past and in sanctioning the conclusiveness of death,³¹ memory makes it present and alive for the community; by giving it the figure of the past and of death to be commemorated, memory saves the individual from the dissolving power of time. And, yet, since being dead and indeed destroyed and past is essential to the recollected event or individual, memory must take onto itself the destructive force of time. In order to transform the event into a *historical* event, memory must destroy it, at least in part do so; in order to universalize the dead individuality in remembrance, collective memory must kill or sacrifice individuality as individuality. Although real, each figure of spirit is not the entire reality of spirit; it is indeed the expression of a concluded story (of the story that memory brings, as it were, to conclusion), yet it is not itself the complete realization. No figure has its fulfillment – or "truth" – in itself. Hence, as chief source of spirit's *Gestaltung*, ethical memory is always and necessarily partial and selective; it is necessarily "external" to the immediacy of the remembered event – always elusive, always hinting at something beyond its actual content. Memory is a process of mediation. From this it follows that in constituting the memorialized figure that gives historical reality to the ethical community, collective memory is neither truthful to the individual, to the community, nor to the story that it is supposed to tell. History is based precisely on memory's betrayal of truth. Memory shapes its contents into figures by making them *other* than what they immediately are. It transforms nature into values, contingent events into consciously performed acts, dead individuality into living, communal universality. While the memorialized figure is always universal, self-conscious, and social, as a figure of the whole it is nonetheless partial, un-true, and necessarily selective.

3 Geometries of memory: the net of religious and historical memory – (CC) *Die Religion*

While the sixth chapter of the *Phenomenology* (BB) *Der Geist*, thematically introducing the dimension of history through the workings of ethical memory, forces Hegel first to re-frame the preceding “figures of consciousness” as “moments” of spirit’s reality, and second to develop the new process of spirit’s own *Gestaltung* as the historical sequence of the “figures of a world,” in the seventh chapter (CC) *Die Religion* we encounter yet another radical break in the course of the work. Again, at stake is the relation between moments and figures of spirit, and the issue regards their respective historicity. The question is whether they are in time and display historical reality or are rather somehow eternal structures of spirit or even mere philosophical abstractions meaningful only in relation to a given historical context. At this juncture we are presented with another epochal *Erinnerung* of spirit from which, retrospectively, a new organization of the entire phenomenological process arises.³² Here we have the second *locus memoriae* of the *Phenomenology*. We are confronted with the problem of the “geometrical” structure of world history in the transition from the manifold historical worlds to the totality of spirit. The question is now: What role does religion play in this constitution process?

Just as history pervades the development of the first five chapters of the *Phenomenology* but is introduced thematically only with *Geist*, so in presenting *Religion* Hegel remarks that religion, as “consciousness of the absolute essence,” has indeed appeared already in the previous figures – namely, in “consciousness, self-consciousness, reason, and spirit” – yet heretofore it had reality only “from the standpoint of consciousness” not as “self-consciousness of spirit”³³ in the different figures assumed by the absolute essence itself. Heretofore religion was considered only as occurring in individual consciousness. Its autonomous reality was not yet sanctioned by spirit’s collective memory. With the emergence of *Geist* the issue regards the historical reality of the figures of spirit as collective figures of a world or epoch. As we have seen, ethical memory articulates the historical reality of each one of these figures and their succession. With *Religion* the issue is the disposition or organization of all those successive figures as constituting the totality of spirit, the final recollection of spirit’s reality in the unitary development of world history. How does Hegel move from the (distributive) claim that each one of spirit’s worlds is historical to the (collective) claim that the overall succession of all those figures taken together is world history? In other

words, Hegel must show not only that the figures of spirit are *individually* historical but also that *collectively* the complete succession of all the figures makes up the development of world history. It is only on the basis of this combined operation that substance can be said subject as *Geist*.

Moreover, at the level of *Religion* another problematic aspect of spirit's figures is at issue, namely, the type of "reality" that they can be said to display. For while, on the one hand, religion is an eternal moment of spirit's self-consciousness and hence does not seem to have a history or be subject to history, religious representation, on the other hand, does appear in different determinate figures whose content has historical reality and is subject to historical change. Throughout the development of spirit, its being recollected in different figures is the mark of the discrete progress of its realization. *Gestalt* expresses a mode of spirit's historical reality, is the mediation between individuality and substance crystallized in an objective organization of the world. The figure, however, has a limited, one-sided reality with a fundamental opacity of its own: *figura* finds its fulfillment or truth in something else, in something always beyond itself. This discrepancy is the engine of history and is also what moves the phenomenological development. To determine the reality of spirit in its figures (and hence in its history) memory has to transform and give unitary shape to a scattered natural reality, animating it with consciousness and with time. In religion, instead, the "universal spirit" seems to have dispelled the existential objectivity and opacity of the figure; aiming directly at the eternal, it seems to have overcome the quandaries of time. "*Gestalt*," contends Hegel, is for it something "utterly transparent" and self-conscious; its "actuality" is "enclosed" and indeed "*aufgehoben*"³⁴ in the universal spirit, apparently with no need for external, historical manifestation. Religious consciousness looks at the dimension of eternity. In their claim of transcendence, religious representations remain separated from earthly existence. The figure is no longer the objective expression of a collective, historical world. It is the *Gestalt* taken on by the religious, self-conscious representation of the absolute essence. Thus, religion initially appears as the interiorization – or *Erinnerung* – of figural representation itself. Its movement – its "completion" or fulfillment (*Vollendung*), as it were – is the progression of a *Gestaltung* process whose protagonist is spirit's figural representation of itself. Figure, this time, is first and foremost form, not content. Given this starting point, the aim of the last phase of the *Phenomenology* is to reclaim to the religious figure the objective, collective, and historical reality of its content. The figural representation of religion must be endorsed and enacted by ethical memory, and

must ultimately reveal the worldly dimension that it seemed to shun. As religion enters history, spirit's historical worlds are connected into the development of world history. This is the achievement of the *Religion* chapter.³⁵

Representation is the element of religion in which spirit represents itself to itself. Herein is the moment of spirit's consciousness. The "actuality enclosed" in religious representation is, Hegel contends, "the figure and the clothing of its representation."³⁶ Such reality is not directly the objective reality of universal spirit; it is only the reality of its representing. The relation between reality and representation is here inverted. Representation is no representation *of* reality; it is representation itself that displays an accessory reality. Thereby representation finds its fundamental limitation. Although it seems to be both form and content, it is unable to bring the two sides to correspond to each other. As form, representation is conscious and self-referential, and properly "religious"; as content, it has reality, the reality of the figure that clothes representation and lends it a communicable shape and meaning. Religious representation aims at capturing the eternal; its figure, instead, is inexorably anchored in time. But to claim that the reality of religion is the figure and "*Kleid*" of its representing activity means to lessen (even to corrupt) the force of such representing, while to claim that the reality of religion is only "clothing" means to make such reality auxiliary to religious representation, leaving out the aspect of its independent and "free existence." Ultimately, the truth is that no "*determinate figure*" can capture what it is supposed to represent, namely, "spirit that is conscious of itself."³⁷ Once again, no determinate figure is in itself fulfilled (*Vollendung*) or truly self-referential; yet this is precisely what religious representation tries to achieve.³⁸ As Hegel shows in the last chapter of the *Phenomenology*, only the structure of *Begriff* – which is no longer properly a figure and is no longer properly phenomenological – is adequate to a *Wissen* that is truly "absolute."

Thus, it is precisely the limitation of religious representation taken as a "figure" of universal spirit or, more generally, the discrepancy between "representation" and "figure" itself, that fuels the movement of the chapter. At this point, even before the new movement can properly begin, Hegel pauses to offer a re-organization of the entire phenomenological development so far positioning the problem of religion in this new context. He frames the task by introducing the new dimension of time and by raising the question of what is the proper subject of history. As in the opening pages of the chapter *Geist* – the first *locus memoriae* of the *Phenomenology* – Hegel now re-thinks (or re-collects) the

preceding development in light of the distinction between the totality of spirit, its figures, and its moments. The question is: Which of these structures is shaped by history and can be said to exist in time? And how does the answer to this question affect the further course of the *Phenomenology* – both retrospectively and proleptically? What we have is yet again an act of *Erinnerung* practiced both by the totality of spirit resulting from the previous development and by the philosopher “we.” As the totality of spirit re-collects (itself), “we” must recollect what we have seen and exposed so far. It is a distinctive act of memory that places certain structures of spirit in time while taking other structures out of time – reserving them, alternatively, for eternity or for the present or for the atemporality of pure logical thinking. The result of this methodological act of memory is a completely new asset or a transfiguration of the phenomenological sequence that must now portray world history.

As religion and spirit in its worldly existence are initially separated, what we have at the beginning of this movement is the distinction between religion on the one hand, and on the other the entire preceding development of the book, which is now collectively subsumed under the concept of “spirit.” The latter in its actuality appears as the “totality of spirit.” Yet spirit is totality only insofar as it is articulated in distinct “moments,” individually following each other, each one as a discrete unity unto itself. This is how we have proceeded through the *Phenomenology* so far. The “moments” of spirit’s totality, Hegel repeats after the opening of the *Geist* chapter, are “consciousness, self-consciousness, reason, and spirit.” Spirit has joined the series as its last moment but only insofar as it is taken as “immediate spirit,” that is, as spirit that has gained reality in the historical world but still lacks self-consciousness.³⁹ On the other hand, *Geist* is also the whole (of which “immediate spirit” is, in turn, the last moment). As such it is “*zusammengefasste Totalität*” – a composite totality retrospectively re-collected into a unity to encompass the entire preceding movement. Herein, consciousness, self-consciousness, and reason are all moments of spirit’s manifold historical totality. Thus, what we have at this point are two distinct and possibly conflicting progressions. Although they seem to merge into each other (and to comprise the same terms), as they are both linear progressions, they must be kept apart if religion ought to be separated from spirit’s worldly existence and have an independent development of its own. On the one hand, Hegel presents the linear *systematic* succession heretofore displayed by the phenomenological narrative – the simple sequence of consciousness, self-consciousness, reason, “immediate spirit” – on the other hand, the *Geist* chapter has

shown that spirit's reality is the reality of *historical* worlds; but as world history enters the phenomenological development with spirit gathering in its totality, the linear succession is interrupted by an act of recollection (*Zusammenfassung*). Hegel's problem is to explain how the two series – the *systematic* and the *historical* progression – can be distinct and yet convergent, thereby bringing the entire phenomenological development to its conclusion. *Erinnerung*, and specifically, religious memory, will provide the required mediation. Hegel's argument from now on proceeds (a) by first introducing the new parameter of time, on the basis of which the distinction between the systematic and the historical series is drawn; (b) then by raising the issue of the subject of history; (c) and finally by posing the question of the relation between time and history, at which point a different organization of world history emerges, an organization no longer linear but in the shape of a net with multiple dimensions. But let us now follow closely Hegel's argument.

First, Hegel needs to justify the separation between spirit's historical existence ("immediate spirit") and its self-consciousness (religion), between what is historical in and of spirit and what may be eternal. To analyze the complex (*zusammengefasste*) totality of spirit, he introduces the element of time and draws on this basis the distinction between "figure" and "moment." What he just called, generically, the "moments" of spirit's "worldly existence" are, more properly, its "figures," which have been articulated, he informs us, according to those moments or "general determinations." Within the reality of spirit, figures have been developed according to the general systematic moments of consciousness, self-consciousness, reason (thus, for example, "sense certainty" and "perception" have been presented as "figures" of the "moment" consciousness; "stoicism" and "skepticism" as figures of the moment self-consciousness, etc.). The figure instantiates moments and carries spirit's concrete reality. Although it expresses a limited reality, as we have often observed, it is nonetheless a well-rounded, complex actuality that contains in itself many different aspects and determinations. The moment is, instead, when held up to the reality of spirit, utterly abstract and one-sided; it is the logical marker or the determination of a systematic position within the phenomenological development. In fact, Hegel warns that the succession of spirit's moments, when contemplated from the heights of *Religion*, "should not be represented as occurring in time." For, "only the entire spirit is in time" because only spirit as a whole has "*eigentliche Wirklichkeit*." Since time is the cipher of true actual existence, only what is actual is in time. And only spirit in its totality has actuality and is in time. Since the moments express neither the reality nor the

totality of spirit, they do not occur in time; their linear progression is only a systematic and logical progression. The figures instead, despite their partiality, directly shape the reality of spirit. They somehow represent spirit *pars pro toto* (the rhetoric *figura* of synecdoche). Unlike the moments, spirit's figures are in time because they are "figures of the *entire* spirit as such."⁴⁰ Since figures are *real* and are representative of the *reality* of spirit they participate in its history; their linear succession (in the chapter *Geist*) is a historical sequence.

Thus, moments being abstract and lacking reality do constitute a sequence but are not in time (consciousness, self-consciousness, reason, spirit – is a systematic sequence); figures, instead, as partial expressions of spirit's concrete reality and totality are in time (sense certainty and perception in consciousness, ethical life, alienated spirit, the enlightenment, etc., in spirit form a historical sequence). While the *moments* give the phenomenological *logic* and the *systematic* hierarchy of spirit, the *figures* tell spirit's concrete *history*. Once the totality of spirit is instituted at the beginning of the *Religion* chapter by a distinctive act of *Erinnerung*, the problem of the relation between spirit's systematic and historical progression emerges. Hegel's suggestion is that spirit's figures form a diachronic series while the moments may coexist synchronically within the same figure. This suggestion, as we shall see, fundamentally changes the structure under which world history is represented. The problem, however, lies in the fact that the claim that the figures constituting the totality of spirit are presented in time does not imply the claim that the whole as such follows the progression of world history.⁴¹ A further argument is needed to ground the temporal development of world history.

It is relevant that only at this point of the phenomenological development are we able to differentiate in this way the fundamental structures of the process – figures, moments, and the whole. For only now can spirit re-collect itself or display a memory that institutes the complex, overarching totality embracing all its historical figures. However, this is also the sign that memory and history have parted ways. And yet religion proceeds as if it could ignore their split. To be sure, with the emergence of religion, spirit itself is split: its complex historical totality – the "*zusammengefasste Totalität*" – is distinguished from and opposed to its "*einfache Totalität*," the simple totality that is religion. Systematically, or in the non-diachronic succession of the moments, religion presupposes the entire development of spirit and is presented as its "absolute self."⁴² Viewed from the standpoint of religion, history seems to develop unconsciously or to have meaning, not in itself, but

in a transcendent eschatological beyond. Only in religion does spirit gain a conscious “self”; only in religious recollection does world history become meaningful. Or, in yet another rendering of the same opening thesis of the chapter, world history is “*figura*” of a transcendent divine plan. These are the initial claims of religious consciousness. As memory appears in the form of memory of the divine and eternal, it seemingly absorbs the course of history entirely and somehow even eliminates (or transcends) it. There are, indeed, people with no history but with a religious memory (Asian, African); and people whose history is identical with their religious memory (Jews). In these cases, what is collectively remembered is not a historical but a religious content (memory is ritual and liturgical re-actualization). Against this initial position, the task of the final movement of the *Phenomenology* is first to show that religion must itself enter history in order to fulfill its course (to be *vollendet*); and, second, to overcome or mend the split between history and religion (or historical and religious memory), figure and truth, substance and subject. This is the concluding function of “absolute knowing” and of the final *Erinnerung* performed by it. For Hegel, the “recollection of the eternal” (*Erinnerung der Ewigkeit*)⁴³ is not a matter of religious representation but of conceptual thinking. In the end, figural history yields to “*begriffene Geschichte*,” or conceptual history, itself the synthesis of factual history and phenomenological science.⁴⁴

To sum up the results reached so far: viewed from the standpoint of religion the “moments” of spirit – consciousness, self-consciousness, reason, and spirit – are neither in time nor history, nor do they display a distinct, objective form of existence or a proper independent reality.⁴⁵ They are abstractions, logical, psychological moments or, alternatively, eternal forms of spirit’s totality present synchronically in its totality. Within the moments, however, figures arise that do have distinct and individual reality and whose succession does take place in time: within the same moment of consciousness the figural distinction between sense certainty and perception “does occur in time.”⁴⁶ The figures give historical, individual reality to the universal moments, thereby generating diachronic sequences within the systematic atemporal progression of moments. The sum total of these figurative sequences is the complex totality of spirit. And this is the subject of history. But what is the form or the inner organization of world history? The claim of religious representation is apparently of no help here. For this performs an *Erinnerung* of the whole that, reducing it to “simple totality,” eliminates time in the dimension of eternity. Herein the historical totality of spirit is separated from its self-consciousness, effectual history from

its transcendent meaning. This is the claim of all eschatological interpretations of history for which the complex totality of partial figures becomes meaningful only on the basis of a divine plan, that is, once assumed in and as the "simple totality" of religious recollection. The phenomenological movement, however, has a different conclusion in store. Religious recollection does bring spirit to its "*Vollendung*."⁴⁷ And, yet, in an important reversal, this occurs not through the elimination of history in the representation of the eternal, but through the historicization of religion and of religious memory. Thereby the *Aufhebung* of representation, and with it the *Aufhebung* of the figural interpretation of history, is achieved, and the *Phenomenology* is brought to the threshold of its conclusion. Only "absolute knowing" and the "concept" will eventually "eliminate" time.⁴⁸

Religion achieves spirit's "completion" insofar as in it the movement of *Er-Innerung* brings the moments of spirit to their "*Grund*." In religious memory, Hegel claims, these moments "return and have returned to their ground."⁴⁹ Religious memory is re-actualization or re-enactment of the atemporal moments of spirit in the element of representation.⁵⁰ The aim of the development of religion – of its successive inner figuration – is to claim for spirit in its totality the unity of the "essence" and the "figure," whereby its self-intuition is finally achieved.⁵¹ The movement of religion is the movement of its *determination* in different actual figures. Now, religion takes the specific *determination* of its figure from the determinate stage of spirit's own historical reality to which it is said to "correspond" so that the figure which religion acquires in a certain stage penetrates, in turn, all manifestations of spirit's existence and "stamps them with this common character."⁵² Phenomenologically, religion is a movement of *Erinnerung* of spirit since it re-collects the entire preceding development under a new determination, namely, representation. The entire sequence is now repeated or doubled in a new element. Thereby the figures of religion are referred to in real spiritual forms (and historical epochs) to which they are said to "correspond." We discover that history is not eliminated but rather repeated in religious representation. Thus, the "becoming" of religion is ultimately the story of its entering world history – of the figuration or incarnation of the absolute essence in revealed religion.⁵³

The memorialized repetition of the totality of spirit in religion, which truly implies a thoroughly new organization of the entire phenomenological development up to this point, is presented by Hegel in a complex structure that invests both "memory" and "history" with new meanings. Memory changes the structure of history: the progressing lines – both

the systematic sequence of moments and the diachronic sequence of figures – become a net of correspondences, which constitutes the totality of spirit (finally, in the last chapter of the *Phenomenology*, the net becomes a circle). History is no longer a line proceeding in a temporal succession, but an interwoven net of multiple memories. On the other hand, history brings to light the duplicity of dialectic memory: memory is retroactive and prospective, is the movement into the depths of spirit (*Er-Innerung*) and is radical exteriorization or alienation (*Entäußerung*); memory is the intertwining of time and the concept, repetition and erasure of time in the concept, realization, and alienation of the concept in time.

Hegel contrasts two distinct organizations of spirit. Both are significantly presented as the work of *Erinnerung*. The first model is linear and shapes the phenomenological development up to the *Religion* chapter, bringing the two sequential lines – the systematic and the historical – into convergence. In the succession developed so far, each moment gained its subsistence and permanence as memory created the points of crystallization that mark spirit's sinking down into its own depths, reconnecting with itself and re-collecting itself. Memory gave subsistence to otherwise vanishing moments, shaping them into the real figures of historical worlds. The moments have "substance" only when held together by the recollecting process of memory; yet they also subsist as isolated wholes, each ruled by a different "principle." In them spirit strives for "knowledge" (*Erkennen*) of its own depths.⁵⁴ While at the beginning of *Geist* at stake was the constitution of spirit's historical reality, in the opening of *Religion* we realize that memory's exploration of the depths of spirit has not provided us with history yet, or has provided us only with a simplified history. Spirit is not yet fully historical, or is not yet accomplished spirit (and substance is not fully subject). Spirit is historical in its individual, partial figures but when it is re-collected in its composite totality we discover that this concluded totality itself, hence spirit as a true *whole*, is not yet historical. But how does the whole hold together in all its different figures and moments? How can it be claimed that the whole holds together *historically* (or alternatively that the meaningful order of world history is that which holds together the whole in its different successive figures)? World history is much more than a progressing unidirectional line, and is not mere horizontal temporal succession. Spirit is substance that is becoming subject.⁵⁵ And to this aim substance must come out and reveal or manifest itself. Recall Hegel's contention in the preface: "the power of spirit is only as great as its exteriorization [*Äußerung*], its depth only as deep as it dares to spread out and lose itself in its exposition

[*Auslegung*]"⁵⁶ – a claim that Hegel varies in the last chapter of the work, maintaining that spirit should not act “as if it were afraid of alienation” (*Entäußerung*).⁵⁷ *Ent-Äußerung* must join and complete *Er-Innerung*. This happens precisely at the beginning of the *Religion* chapter. Herein the linear succession (both the systematic sequence of moments and the diachronic sequence of figures) yields to the organization of figures in a net of interconnected memories.

While the previous *single* series in its advance marked the retrogressive steps in it by knots, but from them it continued itself again in *one single* stretch, it is now, as it were, broken at these knots, at these universal moments, and falls apart into many lines which, gathered together up into *one single* bundle, at the same time unifies symmetrically so that the similar differences in which each particular moment took figure within itself meet together.⁵⁸

With this picture, fascinating in its complex geometry, Hegel introduces the second model that shapes anew the foregoing phenomenological process. Now substance has come out of its depths – it is “*herausgetreten*.” And memory has become fully real. Memory is a power that does not allow the single moments (which have acquired separate subsistence in the past) to claim individual, isolated meaning in themselves as was still the case in the preceding linear progression, still centered on successive historical worlds. The moments have no meaning in themselves; but they also have no real meaning when simply arrayed in a sequence or linear succession; to become meaningful, they must be reconnected and re-enacted as figural parts of a collective, universal context – this is spirit in its accomplished totality. Embracing retrospectively the entire progression of past figures, memory considers them now synchronically, holding them synoptically together, and disposing them according to their “correspondences” and “differences” across different systematic moments, thereby indicating how all the past figures respectively articulate the interconnected structure of the same spiritual whole – the totality of a historical epoch. Diachrony yields to synchrony. Memory forcefully interrupts the progression of the line and, cutting it into pieces in its relevant “knots,” reshapes the broken line into the synchronic overview of a net that connects and gathers together figures belonging to different moments. For example, Stoicism, Skepticism, and Unhappy Consciousness as figures of the moment Self-consciousness (B), are now considered synchronically as corresponding to the *Rechtszustand* (legal state) within Spirit (A, c) – the latter being the result of the dissolution

of Greek *Sittlichkeit* to which, in turn, corresponds *Kunstreligion* in Religion.⁵⁹ It is only through this complex operation of rearrangement that the discrete unity of the Roman Empire, for example, is constituted in its internal articulation as an epoch of world history. On this view, the philosophies of the Roman period are reconfigured, more precisely, as the ideologies of the Roman Empire – thinking is seen as dependent on and intertwined with the social and political institutions of the world.⁶⁰ Only through this re-interpretation of the foregoing movement is world history conclusively introduced into the phenomenological development. Only on this basis can Hegel claim that spirit is truly historical. According to this model, each phenomenological “figure” is characterized by three topological coordinates: (a) first by its position within a systematic atemporal moment (Skepticism in Self-consciousness); (b) second, by its position in the diachronic succession of moments (Skepticism lies between Stoicism and Unhappy Consciousness); and (c) third, by its position within a historical epoch (Skepticism as peculiar ideology of the Roman Empire). At stake in this model is no longer a linear, horizontal progression, but the vertical articulation of a section of spirit’s, for example, life – the inner composition of a historical epoch. Dialectically, the vertical exploration of depths (*Er-Innerung*) generates the progression of a line of isolated moments; whereas the coming out of substance (*Ent-Äußerung*), its gaining extension and its spreading out, generates the complex, heterogeneous synchrony of the figures coexisting within the same historical epoch and truly constituting its manifold actuality. History, in its “true reality,” is properly the result of both operations, which are the constitutive operations of memory. History is not a simple line that progresses (or rather goes back to its ground). It is rather the re-organization or the conclusive re-collection of the line that is bent and broken in its epochal knots and then re-constituted in the synchronic, complex unity of an age. Herein the structure of history seems identical with the movement of memory. The historical epoch is the mediation between the “totality of spirit” (the *zusammengefasste Totalität*) on the one hand, and the individual partiality of the “figure” on the other. As a “particular whole” (*besondere[s] Ganze*)⁶¹ the historical epoch is the generative cell of history. It is the multifaceted dimension of the historical present (*Gegenwart*) brought forth by the complex workings of memory.

With this synchronic rearrangement of the phenomenological development, Hegel tries to mend the one-sidedness of collective memory and to generate a plausible model of historical narrative capable of accounting for the complex reality of spirit. World history as the reality

of spirit in its concluded totality is not a line that describes mere succession, but is an encompassing net of correspondences and differences. And, yet, what Hegel confronts in thinking through such totality is not the monolithic, substantial wholeness of history but rather the fragility and contingency and violence of the link that ties together history and memory. History is the recollected unity of broken memories gathered together to constitute the synchronic whole of an epoch. The whole, however, is shattered even before it becomes a whole. The illusory unity and alleged necessity of a “single series” advancing in a “single stretch” is replaced by the unity of a “single bundle” holding together a manifold reality made of manifold parallel recollections. Owing to its genesis, the unity of history remains a quite fragile achievement. Despite the synthesizing efforts of memory, the historical narrative is necessarily plural and discontinuous; its lines are many and are also broken – somehow interrupted. But they are many and they are broken for no other reason than because they result from memory. The unity that memory holds on to and calls history is born shattered, is fragile, and constantly risks falling apart. This is because unity presupposes the act that breaks the line in its epochal knots and starts all over again, repeating the whole in a different figure. This is indeed the contradictory predicament of the connection between memory and history. As we shall see, after the *Phenomenology*, Hegel abandons this model entirely and thinks history according to a very different idea: *Weltgeschichte ist Weltgericht*. Judgment – the original splitting of the whole as *Ur-Teilung* – becomes the leading thread of Hegel’s later reflection.

4 The circle of the last *Erinnerung* and the present – (DD) *Das absolute Wissen*

The last chapter of the *Phenomenology* presents us with the last *Erinnerung*. This final, conclusive act of memory, which follows the ethical recollection at the beginning of *Geist* and the religious recollection at the beginning of *Religion* discloses, in turn, a new form of history. While in the religious *Erinnerung* the geometry of the line is broken and re-constituted into a net to compose the historical epoch as the fundamental unit of the temporal development of world history, “absolute knowing” introduces a circular model of history that attempts to link memory with the dimension of *Gegenwart* – the presence of the eternal as well as the historical present. Thereby the end of the work is brought back to its beginning. The task of the last phenomenological memory is to circularly reconnect absolute knowing to the dimension of Hegel’s historical

present – the *Gegenwart* that occupies the preface of the work. With this act, the collective memory of the *Phenomenology* finally becomes the historical consciousness of Hegel's epoch. Such historical consciousness is the "we" who philosophizes.

The last chapter begins by mobilizing the internal memory of the work. The initial recapitulation of *Religion* – religious consciousness facing its object which, as content of its representation is absolute spirit⁶² – leads first to a repetition of the movement of consciousness: immediate Consciousness, perception, and understanding are now seen as "corresponding" to Religion.⁶³ But the result from which the final movement departs is a higher spiritual totality. What has been presented so far is "in part figure of consciousness in general, in part a number of such figures that *we* bring together and in which the totality of the moments of the object and of consciousness's relation to it can be indicated only as resolved into its moments." On this basis, to approach the final, conclusive totality, what "we" must do is simply to recall or "remember the preceding figures of consciousness."⁶⁴ History and the figures of its manifold historical worlds are set next to the "figure of consciousness in general," and the recollection begins.

This time, Hegel starts back from "observing reason." Once spirit has been recollected in all its forms, at issue is the "conciliation" of consciousness and self-consciousness. Such conciliation takes place (or, properly, has already taken place) both in consciousness and in religious spirit. What we have seen, however, are two distinct conciliations that still remain separate: respectively, in consciousness and in religious spirit. This is because the *Phenomenology* following different geometries of development and different speeds of movement – the line and the net, the ahistorical diachrony and the historical synchrony – has secured this result twice through an unequal development. In the "order in which the figures of consciousness came before us, consciousness reached the individual moments of those figures and their conciliation *long before* religion gave its object the figure of self-consciousness."⁶⁵ In the diachronic series, consciousness is reconciled with self-consciousness even *before* Religion for, with the latter, only the synchronic re-organization of the whole is achieved. The task of the last chapter is to bring together the diachronic and the synchronic series, to show that the conciliation in consciousness and the conciliation in religion are one and the same, thereby re-connecting the different parts of the work in a final, comprehensive act of memory (and of unity). This is the conciliation achieved by "absolute knowing" in which the "series of the figures of spirit" comes to an end.⁶⁶

However, at this point, Hegel reveals that the conciliation that absolute knowing is said to be, and that we expect will take place in the last pages of the book, “has already happened.” Absolute knowing is nothing but the final recollection of what has already happened – the recollection of something that “in itself” has already taken place and needs only to be brought forth in its true and most “proper form” (*eigenliche[n] Form*).⁶⁷ Such form is the “simple unity of the concept”⁶⁸ to which all figurative phenomenological determination must conclusively yield. And yet, being true to memory, Hegel recognizes that also the “concept” has already been encountered in the preceding movement. There, however, the concept was “still a particular figure of consciousness,” just like all other moments. More precisely, the concept has appeared in the different figures that action and its realization have taken throughout the development of spirit. The “beautiful soul” as the figure of spirit certain of itself is the empty concept that is further realized and concretized both in action (in opposition to the emptiness of duty) and in religion as the life of “absolute spirit”⁶⁹ itself. Thus, given that all the possible (phenomenological) content has already been produced before arriving at “absolute knowing,” the true concern of this chapter must be a more radical gesture. At stake in the last movement of the *Phenomenology* is the elimination of all figurative forms of the concept and thereby of figurative history as such. Thereby the last act of memory will lay bare the concept in its pure form. “*Absolutes Wissen*” is knowing that, being the knowing of a doing or acting, has finally reached the unity of substance and subject.⁷⁰ Its memory is now “*our*” own collective memory, and this is “science.” Such memory consists of two operations: on the one hand, we must “gather together the separate moments, each of which in principle exhibits the life of the entire spirit”; on the other hand, we must “hold fast to the concept in the form of the concept,” in spite of the fact that its content has already been given and produced in the form of the figure of consciousness. “*Absolutes Wissen*” is, Hegel maintains, “*begreifende[s] Wissen*.”⁷¹ As the “concept” (*Begriff*) replaces the “figure” (*Gestalt*), a new type of history begins, which is “*begriffene Geschichte*.”⁷² Thanks to the work of the last *Erinnerung*, history is no longer figurative history, memory is no longer phenomenological memory.⁷³ With it, however, the *Phenomenology*, meeting the dimension of the *Gegenwart*, reaches its conclusion.

Once the pure concept – and hence the concept of science – has been attained and the issue of its “existence” posited,⁷⁴ the problem of time emerges yet again. After all, the task of the *Phenomenology* was to bring consciousness to the beginning (or to the standpoint) of science. This

beginning has now clearly become a *historical* problem.⁷⁵ Given that the content of absolute knowing, or of the concept, has already been obtained and was figuratively present all along, and given that absolute knowing is the most extended as well as the deepest act of memory encompassing all that precedes, *when* “in time” can we say that science first appears (or, alternatively, has appeared)?⁷⁶ What is, more generally, the relation between time and the concept? In answering these questions, Hegel sets the conditions for the dialectical act of memory that concludes the *Phenomenology* and leads the way into the Logic.

Historically, “science does not appear in time and actuality” before spirit has attained the consciousness of itself. Such consciousness results (in its philosophical “abbreviation”)⁷⁷ from the entire phenomenological process.⁷⁸ At this point, the foregoing movement is framed in terms of the unitary process according to which the figuration (*Gestaltung*) of substance is its conversion into subject as the appropriation and enactment by the subject. *Erinnerung* is the action that brings spirit into existence – into an existence in time and space. “In actuality the substance that knows exists earlier than its conceptual figure.” However, the type of existence that substance displays is the nonexistence of pure interiority – an *Innerlichkeit* that in its “immediacy” and “undeveloped simplicity” is mere “concealment”: in substance, the “self of spirit is a self that does not yet exist (*noch nicht da ist*).”⁷⁹ The existence of substance as mere interiority is no real existence unless and until it is recollected; thereby it is known by the act of *Er-Innerung* which, giving sensible, real, and indeed historical figure to that interiority, completely converts it into exteriority. The *Begriffsgestalt* is the conclusion of the figurative process through which the metaphysical substance becomes “substance that knows.” Substantial *Innerlichkeit* yields to the act of *Er-Innerung* that characterizes the subject – this time the collective subject that is the protagonist of history. This is *Geist*.

Hegel distinguishes two perspectives: the initial position of consciousness for which the whole comes before its articulation in moments, but is an uncomprehended totality; and the final position of the achieved concept or science for which the whole is the result of the preceding process of figuration. The former indicates the phenomenological development up to absolute knowing; the latter is the standpoint of absolute knowing itself, that is, the collective historical consciousness of the philosophizing “we.” “In the concept that knows itself as concept the moments... appear earlier than the fulfilled whole, whose coming-to-be is the movement of those moments. In consciousness, on the contrary, the whole, though uncomprehended, is prior to the

moments"⁸⁰: consciousness starts from the substantial totality and articulates it into moments.

The distinction of these two orders on the basis of what comes first (at least logically and phenomenologically) poses the additional problem of time. "Time," Hegel announces in a famous formulation, "is the concept itself that exists and presents itself to consciousness as empty intuition." Time and the concept are identical – time is the concept in the element of existence, is its *Dasein*. But time is also the concept that exists, for consciousness, as empty intuition. "For this reason," Hegel claims, "spirit appears necessarily in time, and appears in time so long as it has not grasped its pure concept, that is, so long as it has not annulled time."⁸¹ That time and the concept are identical and yet distinct is both the reason for spirit's appearance in time – for its phenomenological and historical existence – and the basis of spirit's necessary overcoming of time – of its logical existence. Absolute spirit is set at the juncture of these two modes of existence. Appropriating and reinterpreting Kant's idea of time as a pure form of intuition (or as transcendently ideal but as empirically real), Hegel maintains that time is indeed the concept, yet it is different from the concept. Time is the concept, not in conceptual, pure or self-conscious form, but is the concept in external and existing, opaque, merely intuitive form or figure. In other words, time is not the mode of the conceptual comprehension of the concept, which will be provided by the Logic (which consequently and not in time and not of time) but only the mode of its intuitive appropriation, which has been offered by the phenomenological process and is displayed in its reality by history. Absolute knowing is the point in which "the only intuited concept" (*der nur angeschaute Begriff*) yields to the "conceiving and conceived intuiting" (*begriffenes und begreifendes Anschauen*).⁸²

The relation of identity and opposition between time and the concept parallels and integrates the relation between the exteriorization of the merely virtual, substantial interiority and the recollection of the manifold external existence in the self-conscious act of spirit. This relation is the basis of the movement of development in general (*Entwicklung*), and of the development of substance to subject in particular.⁸³ The necessity of this movement is spirit's historical destiny or the necessity of its historical existence as "*wirkliche Geschichte*."⁸⁴ Since such movement leads, at the same time, to spirit's collective *Erinnerung*, history joins memory when *Geist* completes itself as *Weltgeist*.⁸⁵ Recollection, however, being the self-comprehension of spirit in its concept, eliminates time, eliminates the exteriority of intuition, and eliminates all meaning of (and all need for) figurative history.⁸⁶ Memory stops time,

immortalizes death, freezes the flow of history's manifold figures in a still, collective snapshot. It follows that at this point, as memory intervenes, history (at least figurative or phenomenological history) reaches its end. And this is the true conclusion of the *Phenomenology*. History and memory part ways once and for all – and part ways on *conceptual* grounds.

To conclude, as the *Phenomenology* achieves the historical consciousness of Hegel's own present; the separation of history and memory is finally sanctioned. While at crucial junctures throughout the process the work of *Erinnerung* has served Hegel to transform the development of consciousness's experience into the collective movement of history, once "absolute knowing" is attained history and memory eliminate each other. Memory becomes one with forgetfulness; its living flux is preserved in a gallery of still (dead and past) images whose flow is cancelled in the instantaneous present; history is *aufgehoben* – translated and overcome – in the atemporal and aspatial dimension of the pure "concept."⁸⁷ The final separation of history and memory is due to two developments: first, to the reflexive turning of history upon itself, expressed by the notion of "conceptual history" (*begriffene Geschichte*); second, to the end of the tradition of memory developed by the collective consciousness of the *Phenomenology* and sanctioned by the postrevolutionary historical present. Significantly, these are also the two conditions that allow the Logic to begin. As the collective construction of the memorializing phenomenological "we," figurative history disappears to make room for the purely ahistorical and atemporal development of the concept. The phenomenological figures – figures of consciousness, of historical worlds, of atemporal phenomenological moments – yield to the logical determinations or moments of the concept. We will have to wait for the emergence of "objective spirit" in order to reconstitute the ethical context of collective memory. History, however, will not appear in that context but rather beyond it. For, at this point, the systematic conditions of Hegel's discourse on memory and history have changed. After the *Phenomenology*, in the epoch whose outlines this work helps to bring to light, the separation of history and memory (itself the result of their phenomenological interaction) has become the cipher of modernity. In the preface, Hegel outlines the "rupture of equilibrium" that characterizes periods of historical discontinuity such as the one following the French Revolution. This is the *Gegenwart* to which absolute knowing goes back with its last *Erinnerung*. Herein Hegel offers an example of what Pierre Nora has called "the acceleration of history": "an increasingly rapid slippage of the present into a historical past that

is gone for good, a general perception that anything and everything may disappear."⁸⁸ It is on this basis that philosophy, for Hegel, must be developed as science. Both memory and history are transformed by such epochal separation: memory becomes a purely logical movement; it becomes logical or dialectical memory but also gains a psychological, subjective depth from which its collective, ethical, and social significance must be eventually recuperated.⁸⁹ History concludes the development of objective spirit sinking the triumph of the nation state in the strictures of negativity and contingency; it appears *beyond* memory, since memory is enclosed within the ethical bounds of the nation state, unable to transcend them. Now, history is no longer a matter of ethical memory, but a matter of justice.

But the first step of this further and complex story leads us to the Logic, that is, to the systematic sphere in which history disappears and memory is transformed, reduced to its purely methodological activity.

2

Thinking and Recollecting: The Logical Memories of Being

After the *Phenomenology*, memory – the ethical memory of spirit and the phenomenological memory of consciousness – seems to disappear along with phenomenological history. For, not only the opposition of consciousness that heretofore has driven on the phenomenological process, but consciousness itself has now disappeared (or has “sunk to the ground”) in the pure, atemporal element of the concept. At this point the Logic begins. But has memory really vanished as the logical process begins? Is it not, rather, a crucial implication of the inner logic of *Erinnerung* – a logic already at play in the *Phenomenology* – that suggests that memory is present and effective precisely there, where its negation is more radical? But what would be, in this case, the “logical memory” at work in the determination process of the pure concept?

The argument of the present chapter develops in close connection with the next. My aim is to bring to light the modifications that *Erinnerung* undergoes once the Logic begins in order to follow the further development to which it is subject after the Logic ends or, to put the point differently, once the Logic is established as the methodological and systematic basis for the development of the entire philosophy of spirit. That spirit now receives a *logical foundation* is what distinguishes the phenomenological notion of spirit from Hegel’s mature concept of *Geist*. In these two chapters I claim that while the Logic articulates the formal, dialectical structures of memory, taking them on within the successive spheres of Being, Essence, and the Concept,¹ the philosophy of spirit, in its first division (Subjective Spirit), fulfills two related yet fundamentally distinct objectives. First, on the basis of the Logic, it uses the methodological or dialectical concept of *Erinnerung* to produce the psychological liberation of theoretical spirit to free thinking and willing; second, it presents, for the first time after the 1807 *Phenomenology*, a

new thematic concept of memory that is crucial for the understanding of spirit's *psychological subjectivity*. Herein we also find the subjective beginning of history as personal narration or personal story. My claim is that the fact that the concept of *Geist* receives its foundation in the Logic orients in a fundamental way the development of Hegel's philosophy of spirit – through its subjective, objective, and absolute forms. In particular, it determines the relationship that spirit entertains with history: personal, subjective history yields to world history and this, in turn, is memorialized by the intrahistorical forms of absolute spirit.

In the present chapter I begin by discussing the “disappearance” of phenomenological memory once the pure dimension of the logical concept is attained. I then proceed to outline the problematic common to the Logic and the Psychology in Hegel's mature system. This becomes the basis for the discussion of the concept of what I call “dialectical memory” in the Logic of Being and Essence, which occupies the remainder of the chapter. The analysis of the liberation that psychological subjectivity undergoes in the philosophy of subjective spirit is instead the topic of the next chapter.

1 Memory lost? The Logic as the “realm of shadows”

I have argued in the previous chapter that the conclusion of the *Phenomenology*, disclosing the dimension of Hegel's present, sanctions the separation between history and memory proper of modernity. As the horizon of Hegel's contemporary world discloses the atemporal dimension of the pure concept in which the Logic begins, history vanishes, reduced by a last act of *Er-Innerung* to the virtual gallery of spirits and figures that constitutes “conceptual history.” Memory, however, is at this point the act of utmost forgetfulness: thinking must now begin its process anew “as if all that precedes were lost for it; as if it had not learnt anything from the experience of past spirits.”² The contemporary world requires a new paradigm of comprehension. We have to see now how the same predicament is expressed in the introduction to the *Science of Logic*. How does the pure logical concept – the concept into which history has vanished and to which it has been appropriated – relate to its vanished phenomenological prehistory and to the task of comprehension posed by the contemporary world? Does the concept retain any “memory” of such prehistory or is it at least capable of *Er-Innerung*? As we shall see, the Logic does indeed display new forms of *Erinnerung*. However, they relate, dialectically, not to the “past” but to the logical movement about to begin – to forms that do not yet exist. Logical memory is a fundamental

function of the *advancement* of the logical process. In the next sections, I support this claim through an analysis of crucial passages of the Logic of Being and Essence. I argue that *Erinnerung* is a fundamental procedure of the dialectical method through which the Logic unfolds or, more precisely, it is the “figure” that the advancement of the dialectical method takes at crucial junctures of the logical process. In particular, logical memory instantiates the contradictory directionality whereby progress is made by “sinking to the ground” while the regressive movement toward an alleged logical “past” turns out to be the forward-looking production of new determinations. Memory’s illusory scheme whereby the alleged search for something lost is truly the production of something that was never there in the first place, but whose production does require the act of forgetting that something is searched at all, becomes the paradigm of the logical advancement in fundamental places of the Logic. First, however, we need to address the initial, introductory question: Is there any trace of the work of memory in the way in which Hegel first presents the specifically *logical* dimension of the concept? To what extent does Hegel’s text license the framing of the logical movement in terms of *Erinnerung*? In the following analysis I shall dwell only on one famous image with which Hegel characterizes the realm of the Logic – an image that, I believe, is closely connected to the conceptual constellation that concludes the *Phenomenology*.

The distinctive character of the “concept” (*Begriff*) of which the Logic displays the immanent determination process is its purity. The element of the concept is “pure,” in the first place, because in the logical determination time and space, nature and history are suspended but are also, at the same time, virtually copresent. Their suspension (the “*verschwundenes Dasein*,” as it were)³ is an implication of the way in which the dimension of pure thinking obtains from the end of the phenomenological process; their copresence is an implication of the way in which Hegel understands logical form. Logical form is neutral with regard to natural or spiritual contents without losing its content determination (i.e., without being abstract; the concept’s purity is not its abstractness). Indeed, the content – even the “materiality”⁴ – of logical form distinguishes the determinations of Hegel’s dialectic-speculative logic from the formality of traditional categories. The “content” of the Logic is “objective thinking,” that is, thinking that does not lack “matter” for real knowledge.⁵ This matter, however, is not qualified in its reality as specifically natural or spiritual. The “pure” reality of the logical determinations is, I suggest, analogous to the “virtual” reality to which the last act of phenomenological *Erinnerung* has reduced the figures of consciousness.

Introducing the Logic, this time once the logical element has been gained,⁶ Hegel claims that “the system of logic is the realm of shadows [*Reich der Schatten*], the world of the simple essences, free from all sensible concretion. The study of this science, to dwell and work in this shadowy realm [*Schattenreich*] is the absolute cultivation [*Bildung*] and discipline of consciousness.”⁷ Thinking’s engagement with these logical shadows is an apparently estranging business far removed from sensible intuition, feeling, and the common representation of things.⁸ No function of psychological thinking, but only thinking in its utter disembodied purity, can grasp these shadows. For, it is through the discipline learned by dwelling and working among these shadows that thinking conquers freedom and independence – gains the capacity of capturing the real in the dimension of truth, namely, the capacity of recognizing rationality in it, the capacity of understanding what is essential, and of leaving aside what is merely extrinsic. It is only on this basis that the activity of psychological subjectivity – intuition, representation, imagination, and so forth – becomes meaningful. To put this point in another way, it is only by dwelling in the realm of shadows that thinking learns how to live self-consciously – truthfully and responsibly⁹ – as a subject in the real world, and how to “fill the abstract structure of the logical element with the content of all truth, to give it the value of a universal” able to embrace all the content and confer on it the intelligibility of truth.¹⁰ This is the task of the Logic with regard to the issue of the intelligibility of the real. But why does Hegel need to portray the Logic as “the realm of shadows” in order to convey the idea of its function for our cognition of truth? Why does thinking have to dwell in the shadowy realm of the Logic in order to be able to capture the meaning and rationality of reality? And in particular, what does the image of the *Schattenreich* say of the status of the logical form – of the possibility that something like a “logical memory” could be embedded in the logical determinations with the function of both guiding the process on and of referring to the real world once the process has reached its conclusion?

In presenting the Logic as “*Reich der Schatten*” Hegel inverts the famous Platonic myth of the cave. The structure of logical determination is responsible for complicating and ultimately overturning the Platonic dualism between the ideal and the real, the fixed intelligible and immutable world of ideas and the changing world of visible things. And yet, Hegel maintains the fundamental Platonic theme of *Erinnerung* as being crucial both for the understanding of logical development and for bridging the separation between the Logic and the *Realphilosophie*.

In book VII of the *Republic* Plato famously uses the myth of the cave to account for the status of human knowledge with regard to eternal ideas and true reality.¹¹ Although unbeknownst to us, prisoners chained in a dimly lit cave with the back to the entrance and to the bright fire that burns therein, the world of human cognition is a subaltern world of shadows not of real things, a world of darkness far removed from the pure light of the ideas, a world in which we use sense perception but the pure intellectual faculty is impeded by our bodily chains. The world of shadows is indeed the paradigm of our human condition. It is a dependent world, as shadows depend on the material objects that cast them; whereas the pure light of truth is independent of its projection, the object of pure vision or intellection. Accordingly, for Plato the latter not the former constitutes the object of pure science. Platonic recollection has a clear directionality that moves from the worldly shadow to its pure archetype. In Hegel's *Logic*, on the contrary, it is the pure forms of truth and being that are reduced to mere shadows: light belongs to the natural and historical human world, not to the pure forms of logical thinking. Such reduction is the result of phenomenological memory at the level of "absolute knowing." And, yet, the logical forms, placed outside of space and time, removed from sensible intuition and from all relation to consciousness, disclose the dimension of truth only to the extent that they are realized or formed in the dynamic process of logical determination leading from the immediacy of "pure being" up to the threshold of the real world with the "absolute idea." Those pure shadows depend on and are one with reality as they grow and move with it, even though they do not leave their shadowy world. The reality of the shadow is a function of the movement of memory that constantly reminds us precisely of the worldly reality of the logical form; it does not depend on the fixed reality of an allegedly separate ideal archetype, as is the case for Plato. On Hegel's account, no truth inhabits the thought determinations arranged in the lifeless tables of formal and transcendental logic, just as no truth animates the rules of grammar isolated from their concrete use in the living language.¹² In these cases, all we have are dead forms – forms that were once living but are dead and meaningless when severed from the living connection with the real world of nature and human activity. These forms, however, can still be called back to life: they have to be allowed to act and show themselves in the movement of their immanent determination. Now this re-activation of the shadowy logical forms on the basis of the memory of the reality which inhabits them is the task of Hegel's *Logic*.

In Hegel's inverted Platonism, logical memory is the dynamic activity of mediation that connects the shadow to the object that casts it, bringing to the fore the way in which the shadow gains the consistency of reality without being identical with any of the empirical manifestations or instantiations of the idea. While phenomenological memory reduces the manifold world of consciousness to the virtual, shadowy purity of the logical form (Absolute Knowing), the determination process of the concept activates a logical memory that ultimately recuperates to the shadow all its real – natural and historical – weight (Absolute Idea). Moreover, the logical shadow is the condition of the intelligibility of the real but is not separated from the real by the unbridgeable distance that Plato sets between the ideas and their copies. And yet, the logical discipline imposed by the realm of shadows does follow in Plato's aftermath insofar as it requires, in a formulation in which Hegel explicitly invokes Plato, attending to "things in and for themselves," without their "sensible substrates."¹³ This is the basis of the pure activity of logical recollection.

On a general methodological level, Hegel explicitly connects the procedure of *Erinnerung* to the structure of *Entwicklung* or "development" that characterizes the dialectical process in its immanent unfolding and opposes both to "immediate knowing." Significantly, Plato (and more precisely, "Plato's *Erinnerung*") is mentioned in this connection.¹⁴ Like the movement of development, recollection is the activity of mediation through which determinate contents are apprehended and known in their conceptual form; but it is also the act by which such contents are first posited as real and validated in their determinateness. Similarly, on the more concrete level of spirit's or consciousness's experience, any claim of immediacy and any content, insofar as it is experienced and apprehended (or insofar as it is not "in and for itself" but for consciousness), presupposes the mediation proper to the process of *Entwicklung* – be it the movement of personal or collective recollection, education, or culture.¹⁵ Not immediacy, but the personal or cultural memory that first institutes something as immediate constitutes the real beginning of thinking. The dialectical development that unfolds in Hegel's Logic is methodologically construed according to two dimensions. On the one hand, it is the movement of going back or sinking to the ground – *Erinnerung* that institutes what is given at the beginning as an immediate, hence as a true beginning or a starting point. On the other hand, it is the development that moves forward and meets the beginning (yet again, circularly), this time as a result (the beginning that has begun) – the proper memory of that beginning, its re-collection or accomplished mediation.

In the following discussion, after having brought to light the common problem underlying the development of logical and psychological thinking, I show how *Erinnerung* functions in the constitution of the structures of dialectical thinking – both logical and psychological thinking. I examine, first, the case of the Logic or the work of memory in the “realm of shadows,” and then, in the next chapter, I move to the analysis of theoretical spirit in the Psychology, that is, to the work of dialectical memory in the liberation of theoretical spirit.

2 Logic and psychology: thinking and being

In the mature system of philosophy that Hegel consigns to the three successive editions of the *Encyclopaedia* (1817, 1827, 1830) the issue of memory – *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis* – is addressed thematically in the last sphere of subjective spirit, in the Psychology, which follows the Anthropology and the Phenomenology and prepares the transition to objective spirit. It is at this level that spirit’s subjectivity acquires its highest and richest significance. After the 1807 *Phenomenology*, Hegel develops the different forms of spirit and their reality on the basis of the method provided by his dialectic-speculative logic. Although this point is generally recognized, for better or for worse, by the interpreters, what this systematic claim amounts to, what it implies, and what justifies it, are all but clear. I shall begin the discussion of a particular instance of this central issue by maintaining that the logical foundation of the philosophy of subjective spirit is warranted by the common problematic basis proper to the Logic and the Psychology. It is precisely their common problem, which they address at different systematic levels or at different levels of abstraction, that justifies the development of the forms of theoretical spirit on the basis of the Logic. In the next chapter I will show that it is, more particularly, the concept of *Erinnerung* employed and presented by Hegel in these sections of the Psychology (and not a more or less arbitrary “application” of logical categories to real forms) that reveals the meaning of the logical foundation of subjective spirit and its broader implications for the systematic articulation of the concept of history at the level of objective spirit.

What, then, is the problem common to speculative logic as the science of pure thought and to the psychology of subjective spirit, that is, to spirit caught in the transition from sensible intuition to free thought? After Kant’s critique of traditional metaphysics and his conversion of formal logic into transcendental logic, for Hegel logic can no longer be related to, or developed on the basis of, the concept of subjectivity

and personality proposed by rational psychology. On Hegel's account, replacing the psychological subject with the transcendental subject, Kant's transcendental logic has already started the reduction of logic to a new form of metaphysics. Kant's transcendental logic has begun the transformation of metaphysics (and of rational psychology in particular) into logic, or has proposed to replace (general or formal) logic with a new idea of metaphysics.¹⁶ On the other hand, since logic is the science of pure thinking, it cannot refer to empirical psychology either, namely, to the empirical study of the collection of mental faculties and activities related to a presupposed psychological subject and enacted by it. In this regard, radicalizing Kant's own critique of traditional psychology, Hegel's Logic is meant as a further critique of Kant's still too-psychological account of understanding and reason. Far from retaining the meaning of mental faculties, understanding and reason become for Hegel necessary "moments" of "every logical and real formation" (*jedes Logisch-Reelle*),¹⁷ interconnected stages of the immanent development of all dialectic processes. Thus, instead of depending on psychology (or phenomenology), Hegel's Logic is rather the systematic as well as methodological basis on which he proposes a new idea of psychology as part of a philosophy of subjective spirit. The logical structure of Hegel's *Begriff* and its realization to Idea provides the one and only possible speculative candidate that can take the place of the *metaphysica specialis* in the aftermath of Kant's critique. In Hegel's system cosmology becomes a philosophy of nature, psychology is transformed into a philosophy of finite spirit, and theology becomes a philosophy of absolute spirit.¹⁸ While the Logic is indeed systematically presuppositionless as it depends neither on a phenomenology nor on a psychology, the Psychology of the philosophy of subjective spirit is methodologically developed on the basis of the Logic and presupposes the Phenomenology as the immediately preceding stage of spirit's development.

The general issue common to the conclusion of the *Phenomenology*, to the beginning of the Logic, and to the development of theoretical spirit in the Psychology, is the problem of introducing the notion of "objective thinking."¹⁹ With the notion of "objective thinking" Hegel establishes first that thinking is (identical with) the thought object, and second that whatever is thought is what it is only insofar as it is thought. The figure of "absolute knowing" that concludes the *Phenomenology* aims at establishing the objective dimension of thinking beyond the opposition of consciousness. But at this conclusive point the self-comprehension of knowledge in the form of the concept has also the meaning of a

thorough “alienation” of the subjectivity of knowledge *qua* absolute – its becoming truly and entirely objective, its losing once and for all the constitutive relation to consciousness. Thereby the phenomenological process that consisted in immanently generating successive figures of consciousness has fulfilled its task. Alternatively, Hegel presents this predicament as the “sacrifice” of the subjective “self” that characterizes knowing in its absoluteness, that is, in its phenomenological conclusiveness.²⁰ In the formulation given later by the Psychology, this twofold claim is expressed by the following thesis: thinking is the *Sache* itself; it is being (*Sein*) in the dimension of truth as that which is proper to thought or that which thought calls its own or its most proper (*Seiniges*); thinking knows that what is thought is (is objective); and knows that what is, is only insofar as it is thought and it is itself thinking.²¹ In the formulation given by the Logic the notion of objective thinking is expressed in the following way: it is the same to claim that the Logic has as its object “thinking insofar as it is the *Sache* in itself,” and to claim that the Logic has as its object “the *Sache* in itself insofar as it is pure thought.”²² The formulation of the Psychology and that of the Logic are entirely equivalent. It is this equivalence that warrants the role that *Erinnerung* plays, for example, in leading the *Sache* to existence in the Logic of Essence, and in the liberation of theoretical spirit from the givenness of its contents in the Psychology. More generally, the identity of thought and being is that which promotes speculative logic to “metaphysics proper” (*eigentliche Metaphysik*),²³ and renders the philosophy of spirit a true “metaphysics of spirit.”²⁴ Both in the Logic and in the Psychology, the conclusion of the phenomenology (of both the 1807 *Phenomenology* and of the Phenomenology section of the philosophy of subjective spirit in the *Encyclopedia*) is the systematic condition that allows Hegel to reach the sphere of objective thinking. For, at the end of the phenomenological development, and through such development, the opposition between subject and object characterizing consciousness is eventually overcome. And consciousness is followed by (and “liberated” to) the form of thought (both in the Logic and in the Psychology).²⁵ Although *Denken* and *Gedanke* are the topic of both disciplines, in the Psychology objective thinking acquires an additional subjective dimension closely connected to the development of thinking’s manifold material side. The psychological subject emerges through the act of ascribing that materiality to itself as its own.

The section of the Psychology dedicated to theoretical spirit is framed by the remarks in which Hegel explains the common history and the shared content of the disciplines of logic and psychology.²⁶ While

speculative logic articulates the *formal* dimension of objective thinking as “pure” thought – or, as discussed above, as the shadowy realm of pure forms – psychology establishes the *material* dimension of thought in the objectivity “*stofflich*” and factual of its manifold intuitions, representations, memories, and images.²⁷ It is in this dimension full of content that thinking finds itself as free and that the thinking subject emerges as the subject of what it can now rightly call its own personal mental history.²⁸ Significantly, however, the development of the Psychology shows that this personal history precedes the subject who ascribes this history to herself as her own (or the subjective thinking that recognizes being as its own). In this framework, the Psychology displays the meaning of thinking insofar as *Denken* is “having thoughts.”²⁹ Moreover, both the Logic and the Psychology construe an “ideal world”³⁰ – the “shadowy world” that becomes the “inner essential skeleton” of reality, in the case of pure thinking investigated by the Logic, a world initially submerged in the night of the intelligence that must be redeemed to the light of reason and the concept, in the case of the Psychology.³¹

Because of the identity of thinking and being, both the logical articulation of pure thought and the psychological development of intelligence to free thinking meet the problem of being – *Sein*. The Logic poses the problem at the very beginning (and from this placement the solution of the problem follows): “*Sein, reines Sein*” is a logical beginning that precedes all discursive thought, all determinate objects of thought, and even the possibility of the linguistic expression of thought. Hegel warns that “*Sein, reines Sein*” is nothing, is meaningless, “empty thought,”³² is the lack of all propositional articulation. It is the mere act whereby thinking *begins* with no other condition or presupposition. The Logic is the process that leads the immediate indeterminate being with which pure thinking begins to the realized actuality of the idea as the true form of all reality. In contrast to the inarticulate expression of pure being, the absolute idea that emerges at the end of the Logic is the *logos* or the “original word” in which the linguistic articulation of logical thinking comes to the fore in its full and complete “expression” (*Äußerung*).³³ The intermediary station in this development leading from the inarticulate immediacy of “being” to the conclusive expression/alienation of the idea’s original utterance is the sphere of essence. In the remainder of this chapter I show how at different stages in the Logic Hegel employs the crucial methodological operation of “dialectical memory” or *Erinnerung* to bring about these successive logical transitions.

The problem of being occupies the discussion of the Psychology as well. Just as in the Logic, in the Psychology being is placed at the very

beginning. Here, however, the beginning is not the utter indeterminateness of the logical “being, pure being” but is a “determinate beginning,” is a beginning in which spirit finds itself “determined” by its content.³⁴ The beginning of theoretical spirit is now determined by that which systematically precedes spirit and becomes its object. Whatever spirit produces as its object or content is in the “double” determination provided by this systematic origin: it is in “the determination of *something that is* and in the determination of *something that spirit calls its own*” – in “*die [Bestimmung] des Seienden und die des Seinigen*.”³⁵ What spirit produces is – *Seiendes* – exists, and has objective reality; as such, it is also its own – *Seiniges*; it is the objective property of spirit. Thus, in the development of theoretical spirit, thinking will emerge from intuition and representation as soon as it remembers being as its own “property.” As is the case for the immediate, absolute beginning of the Logic – *Sein, reines Sein* – so the mediated beginning of spirit – *Sein* that is *sein*, namely, spirit’s *Seiniges* (proper to spirit) – expresses not only a particular content but the program of the discipline as a whole. As in the Logic, the conclusion of the psychological movement of thinking takes place by way of an *Erinnerung* that articulates the linguistic element of thought.

2.1 Memory and method

At this point, we must take the movement of the Logic into closer consideration and, connecting it to the development of the forms of subjective spirit on the basis of the common problematic framework outlined above, we must raise the following questions: How does the development of the “shadowy realm” (*Reich der Schatten*)³⁶ of the Logic yield the complete and fully realized “absolute idea” in which pure logical thinking in the highest act of its freedom, with the problematic gesture of a final “decision,” sanctions the end of the logical science and determines the transition to (the philosophy of) nature?³⁷ What happens at the end of the Logic to the indeterminate being of the beginning? These questions parallel the one raised by the Psychology: How does the intelligence, submerged in the manifold material given in intuition and in the images of representation, master their allegedly independent being so as to appropriate them, thereby finding itself and becoming free thought? At stake in both cases is the developmental structure of the process over and above the results that the process produces. I argue that Hegel’s use of the dialectic procedure of *Erinnerung* in the Logic and in the Psychology, respectively, offers the answer to those questions. At the beginning of the Psychology, Hegel suggests that the crucial issue for

this discipline concerns the “necessary transition” from one activity (or faculty) of intelligence to the next – that is, the immanent presentation of their necessary succession.³⁸ This, I submit, is for Hegel a question of “method” – where method refers to the way of generating immanent transitions that is developed in the Logic. I claim that “dialectical memory” is the methodological procedure established by the Logic that immanently structures the development of theoretical spirit in the Psychology. Before becoming a psychological moment of spirit – and in order to become that – dialectical memory is “method.”³⁹ For, dialectical memory and the process that memory prompts are in charge of carrying out those necessary and immanent transitions, thereby constituting pure being successively into essence and into idea, and constituting spirit into the (psychological) subject – into the subject who thinks, has a mental life, and, as subject, ascribes to herself her own mental life as a personal narrative. Both in the Logic and in the Psychology, *Erinnerung* is the procedure that lends actuality and objectivity but also lived meaningfulness⁴⁰ to the ideal, shadowy world of thought – a world that is itself the result of the forgetfulness inherent in the dialectical nature memory. By recollecting and remembering something that has never existed before (because it still lies ahead in the process), memory creates for the first time the reality of its object, the being of thought, as an actuality that is truly and entirely the reality proper to thought – essence as the being that has been thought in the Logic, being as the being proper of the subject’s mental history in the Psychology.

More specifically, in taking dialectical memory to be “method” I intend to underscore the following peculiarities that emerge from a first, general assessment of Hegel’s employment of the term in the Logic and the Psychology. Memory, for Hegel, does not presuppose the temporality or historicity of being, namely, the necessity that that, which presently is, had been. For, it is memory that first posits temporality as meaningful. Dialectical memory shares with the pure forms of thinking its being a function of logical, atemporal succession. Nor does memory ontologically appeal to a pre-existent archetype, as for Plato. Just as the pure logical forms, its shadowy activity is one with the reality that it recollects. This explains Hegel’s curious use of the term *Erinnerung*, which is never transitive but always reflective (*sich erinnern*) since in it the intentional “remembered” object does not (yet) exist. In fact, it is the act of remembering (intransitively and reflectively) that first produces (and posits) the object as a remembered object. The task of the Logic is to bring to light this fundamental structure. Paradoxically (but, truly, dialectically), for Hegel, we do not remember “something”

(lost or forgotten or left behind) – not in the Logic (neither at the level of Being nor of Essence) and not even in the Psychology. In both cases we start rather from the illusory appearance, or *Schein*, of something given that seems to be recollected in order to discover that it is recollection which first posits something as given. There is nothing to remember. In this regard, memory is rather its opposite, namely, the erasure of all objectivity and meaning: being, pure being, is nothing; the initial internal space of memory is a dark and bottomless pit from which consciousness is absent; the realm of *Gedächtnis* or mechanical memory is the void populated by words that lack all sense; even the final recollection of the phenomenological Absolute Knowing is the inexorable plunging (“*versinken*,” which is a *Zugrundegehen*) into the “night of self-consciousness.”⁴¹ There is nothing presupposed or given that is then, successively, remembered. The very process of recollection is all there is. *Sich erinnern*, used in an absolute reflective, intransitive sense, retroactively institutes the very possibility of remembering *something*, namely, the possibility of an object, a sense, a being – that was not there before. This reveals the function fulfilled by memory as method. Herein emerges, yet again, the constitutive duplicity proper to Hegel’s *Erinnerung*: memory is, at the same time, the negation of being (and sense) and its position, the gesture that erases and the gesture that calls something into existence, the movement of internalization and sinking to the ground (*In-sich-Gehen*, *Zugrundegehen*) and the opposite movement of exteriorization, alienation, and expression (*Ent-Äußerung*). But this claim must be pushed even further. What lacks in the works of Hegel’s dialectic memory – first and foremost in the Logic but also, significantly, in the Psychology – is not only memory’s intentional object; the thinking subject (as substantial subject) who remembers is also absent. Dialectical memory is neither a psychological faculty in the traditional sense nor a mental function inherent in a substantial subject.⁴² For the constitution of the subject – logical subjectivity in the Idea, psychological subjectivity in the process of theoretical spirit – is rather the final result, respectively, of the presentation of the absolute idea and of the process of theoretical intelligence. Eventually, in both cases, subjectivity it is the result of the “highest form” of *Erinnerung*.⁴³ Thinking’s reflective act of *sich erinnern* does not presuppose but rather institutes for the first time the possibility – and indeed the reality – of the subject who remembers. This is, accordingly, the subject who exists insofar as it reflectively remembers or re-collects herself in a personal history, thereby positing a personal history made of memories, representations, images, and linguistic signs.

In sum, by stressing the *methodological* function of dialectical memory my claim is that at the most foundational level – that is, in the Logic but also, on the basis of the Logic, in the Psychology – there is, for Hegel, the process of recollecting without anything to recollect and with no one who recollects. Memory produces, for the very first time, both the remembered object and the thinking subject who actually remembers (the object as herself). Both in the Logic and in the Psychology the true freedom of thinking arises precisely from this process. This is indeed a relevant difference separating the Logic from the *Phenomenology* (or what I called “dialectical memory” from phenomenological memory). The term *Geist*, summarizes, for Hegel, this entire development. Thus, paradoxically, memory does not imply time (and history) as it rather produces the temporal (and historical)⁴⁴ dimension of spirit’s reality; memory does not require an intentional *object* which it remembers because it rather institutes the reality in which and of which spirit remembers; memory does not depend upon a thinking *subject* who remembers because memory is rather the speculative “site” in which the thinking subject is first recognized as capable of memory and truly constituted by it. This is precisely the meaning of spirit’s “subjectivity.”

As the constitution of spirit’s subjectivity is due to the activity of dialectical memory we must now turn to the discussion of the emergence of dialectical memory in the Logic, to its methodological use in presenting the crucial transitions within the shadowy realm of the concept. Thereby I will have shown that the concept of *Erinnerung* has changed but has not vanished in the transition from the *Phenomenology* to the Logic. This development of the function of memory in the Logic constitutes the basis for Hegel’s account of psychological *Erinnerung* in the philosophy of subjective spirit.

3 Logical memory: being without memory?

How do we arrive at the famous beginning of the Logic – “*Sein, reines Sein*” – being that in its utter immediacy is nothing? Hegel arrives at it – indeed returns to it – several times, starting from different systematic places, in a movement that comes from different directions. To be sure, the necessity of this repetition, of this multilateral approach to pure being is the central claim of the beginning of the Logic. It does not make sense to ask what being is. For the answer to this question is as immediate as it is unsatisfactory: pure being is nothing. What needs to be asked is, instead: How do we arrive – or how did we arrive – at being? Or, how does thinking meet/has met being? And on this basis

we need further ask: can being ever be left behind in the process of logical thinking?⁴⁵

On one first approach, that is, on the view that introduces the Logic as the first systematic discipline, pure being that is pure thinking and pure knowing results from the process that leads to the standpoint of Absolute Knowing in the *Phenomenology*.⁴⁶ Let us briefly recall this result. Absolute Knowing opens up to a twofold process that displays opposite – and yet converging – directions. The point of convergence is pure being, the beginning of the Logic. On the one hand, we have the highest alienation of spirit in space and time, namely, its *Entäußerung*, which is the movement whereby spirit knows itself as manifested in the reality of space, time, nature, and history. On the other hand, we have spirit's backwards retreat into itself – the *Insichgehen* that is *Er-Innerung*. This final recollection, however, is not what is generally called memory, for it seems to be rather the opposite. The phenomenological movement of *Erinnerung* reduces the manifold concrete reality of space and time to a virtual, ephemeral being – a being that is cancelled, forgotten and, yet, in this inconsistent form, is also preserved in the “night of self-consciousness.”⁴⁷ At this juncture, as we have seen, real history acquires a virtual side and becomes “*begriffene Geschichte*” – history apprehended in concepts or conceptual history. Thereby, as the manifold reality of consciousness is transfigured in the shadowy world of logical, pure thinking, memory shows itself as oblivion, as the loss of (real) being: *Dasein* vanishes – but at the same time is also “conserved” (*aufbewahrt*).⁴⁸ It is precisely this loss that institutes the pure being/pure thought with which the Logic begins, for it institutes being in the utter immediacy that makes it nothing. Hegel warns that in pure thinking we proceed “as if all that precedes were lost,” as if spirit had not learned anything from the experience of the foregoing moments of consciousness.⁴⁹ What is lost is something that spirit has never possessed, is something that has never existed before, and is the task of the new dialectical movement of the Logic to produce and present for the first time. *Erinnerung* institutes being as identical to nothing, and thereby shows that there is nothing preceding pure thinking, nothing to be recollected from which thinking can take its departure. The Logic rests on no presupposition – is indeed entirely *voraussetzungslos* – as the attempt to go backwards inexorably leads us forward to the absolute emptiness of pure being/pure thought.⁵⁰ In this double movement, *Erinnerung* shows an affinity with another famous procedure of dialectic, namely, *Aufhebung*.⁵¹ They both display a “twofold meaning” – that of maintaining in virtual or “ideal” form (the shadow in which *Dasein* is conserved), and that of

canceling and suppressing, the actions in which negativity is at work in its determinate form.⁵² Memory, however, complements *Aufhebung's* determinate negativity with both the retroactive movement that leads thinking back into itself (*Insichgehen*) and with the apparently opposed process of alienation or *Entäußerung*.

Thus the *Erinnerung* taking place at the end of the *Phenomenology* institutes the beginning of the Logic as a beginning which is immediate, absolutely indeterminate, and lacking all presupposition. Being is nothing; being is bound to nothing by its utter indeterminateness, by an unstable identity in which no determination is present and in which the incessant movement vanishes as soon as it arises. Moreover, the movement of being-nothing is a movement with no direction, is no development or *Entwicklung* yet, for this necessarily implies mediation. How does thinking manage to break the flux of this unstable *Werden*? How can this "paralytic"⁵³ unity be set in true motion and the beginning be turned into the actual beginning of a process of immanent determination and advancement (*Fortgang*)? I cannot dwell on the analysis of this crucial moment of the Logic at this point.⁵⁴ Here, I want to underline only that Hegel is well aware that the problem of the logical beginning is the problem of the advancement of the logical process. Accordingly, in two important remarks on the opening of the Logic, he offers a discussion meant to anticipate the development of the pure being of the beginning in the further advancement of the process. The first remark issues an important warning. The fundamental modality in which the unity of being/nothing is, is the movement of *Verschwinden*, that is, the immediacy of a "vanishing" and disappearing without trace, which characterizes anything that is and is thought before it can attain the subsistency that makes it being and being thought, namely, determination. Yet, the suppressing power of *Verschwinden* notwithstanding, "such unity of being and nothing as first truth *lies as the foundation once and for all [ein für allemal zugrundeliegt]* and constitutes the element of all that follows."⁵⁵ In other words, Hegel warns that even though it is not always evident – and hence one could be tempted to forget – in moving forward we have to remember that the unity of being and nothing constitutes from now on the foundation of the entire logical advancement. Even though in proceeding on the logical path we may believe that this unity is lost, overcome in the increasing complexity of determination, we have to remember that this unity remains the basis of the process, hence is always there as an ever-present insuppressible *logical memory*. Indeed, Hegel claims that such unity is the "element" in which pure thinking moves in the unfolding of its determination process.

Hegel's second remark adds an important point to this claim. The logical beginning is an absolute beginning. Such a beginning is immanent, that is, does not issue from the act of an "external reflection," but rather is endowed with the moving force of an "internal" reflection (and negativity) which Hegel calls "pure reflection." In its immanent, pure reflection, the beginning does not betray or anticipate the transition (*Übergang*) to becoming (*Werden*). As Hegel puts it, in the form of being such "transition" is "still concealed."⁵⁶ The logical succession of being/nothing/becoming is not the product of some determination already present within being, hence presupposed in it – a determination from which at the beginning one would make abstraction and which one would have to recollect in order to gain an understanding of how the transition is made.⁵⁷ Rather, the immediate movement by which being vanishes into nothing is pure being itself. Pure being is nothing but the very vanishing and disappearing into nothing: the dynamic of being identical with nothing. In other words, Hegel warns that being does not result from a separate, external act of abstraction, which would then have to be remembered in order for the process to advance. On this view, the successive act of *Erinnerung* would have to be assumed as the condition of the following movement: it would be the true logical beginning, yet not an immanent beginning. For Hegel, by contrast, being in its absolute immediacy is the threshold behind which it is utterly impossible to retreat. No *Erinnerung* will possibly take us back behind and beyond the immediacy of being. Thus, logically, being is the limit of memory. Being is the constitutive grounding condition of all successive acts of *Erinnerung*. It is not, however, a possible *object* to be remembered. The immediacy and indeterminacy of being as beginning is due precisely to the fact that in it, and of it, no memory is possible. It follows that only the successive determination of being (being in the advancement of the process as opposed to being in the immediacy of the beginning) can yield the progressive and retroactive constitution of being's memory. Thus, being is not, properly, a category, is not the carrier of meaning – it is rather the most extended horizon within which all successive meaning is inscribed, that which one must at every step recollect in order to move forward in the immanent development of thinking. Yet, being is also that behind which it is impossible to retreat, that behind which no possible memory can bring, i.e., that of which there can be nothing more original. In this way, *Sein* is instituted as the basis of the entire development of Hegel's Logic – it is, at the same time, the utmost limit of memory and the point from which all memory originates.

3.1 Logical memory: essence as the memory of being

The second sphere of the Objective Logic that follows the Logic of Being is the Logic of Essence. Herein we again approach being, returning to it with an act of dialectical memory and, accordingly we also leave it behind, yet again. Essence is initially defined as the result of the movement of being: "The *truth of being* is *essence*."⁵⁸ The beginning of essence seems to contradict what Hegel has established regarding the immediacy of being at the beginning of the Logic. Essence, he argues, is the movement of cognition that, in search for the truth of immediate being, of what being is in and for itself, is carried by the assumption that "behind (*hinter*) being there is something else than being itself, and that this background (*Hintergrund*) constitutes the truth of being." After all, as we have seen, the point of the beginning with pure being was the impossibility of going behind it, of regressing to a more original level that being might presuppose. In fact, Hegel immediately corrects this semblance of contradiction and shows that any attempt to go behind being is nothing but thought's sinking further into it. The movement of "coming out" (*Hinausgehen*) of the sphere of being is the process that "penetrates deeper [*Hineingehen*] into it."⁵⁹ For one thing, thinking and knowing are no longer immediately one with being, no longer sunken in the immediacy of being; thinking is "mediated knowing," is the thinking of essence. The problem is, precisely, how thinking can gain the dimension of essence, how it can be the thinking of essence. Hegel declares: "[I]t is only insofar as knowing recollects itself (*sich erinnert*) and penetrates into itself from/out of immediate being, that it *finds* (*findet*) essence through this mediation."⁶⁰ Hegel's use of the verb *sich erinnern* is herein significant. Knowing reflectively "recollects itself"; but this recollection is not a movement *into being* but a movement that, leading *out* of it, sinks thinking deeper into itself. The act of "coming out" that characterizes memory hides an important illusion or *Schein*: one thinks that memory is a coming out that regressively leads backwards into the ground; yet, memory is, on the contrary, the movement of coming out that brings forward to a completely new determination. Thereby, the *Erinnerung* that first discloses essence is construed as a contradictory twofold movement, just as twofold is (as we shall see) the movement of the absolute method that concludes the Logic. In the last pages of the Logic, Hegel shows that every step in the progressive advancement of determination, by getting further and further away from the beginning, defines at the same time the movement that gets closer and closer to the beginning. In this way, the logical process viewed from its end

is both the “regressive foundation [*rückwärtsgehende Begründen*] of the beginning and [its] progressive further determination [*vorwärtsgehende Weiterbestimmen*].”⁶¹ This is the circularity of the logical method.⁶² But there is yet another illusion generated by the logical recollection that first institutes essence. Not only does recollection lead thinking away from being, pushing it forward to a new determination while creating the illusion to penetrate behind being itself, but in addition, thinking’s reflective act of “recollecting itself” generates the semblance that something, namely essence, is merely “found” on thinking’s way backwards, behind being. As we shall see, a similar illusion that something is accidentally “found” in the process of recollection accompanies the memory of intelligence in the development of subjective spirit. Yet, nothing is truly “found” in the act of memory. *Erinnerung* is always a new beginning.

In sum, the sphere of essence is established by a movement of logical *Erinnerung* through which Hegel expresses the mediation of being’s immediacy and the beginning of a new realm of logical determination. *Erinnerung* retroactively institutes essence as the movement in which being-thought penetrates deeper into itself and thereby comes out of itself to a new determination process. Thereby we discover that being is no longer being, but has become something else, namely, essence. The retroactive constitution of the new sphere sanctions a discontinuity with the preceding logical development. The end of the sphere of being is the beginning of essence. Or, as Hegel puts it, “the *truth* of being is essence.”⁶³ As a fundamental function of Hegel’s dialectic-speculative logic, memory does not generate continuity but radical discontinuities; it marks the distinction of “epochs” – the distinction of logical as well as historical and spiritual epochs. Resulting from being as its truth, essence is already out of the sphere of being; essence is its “successor.” Logical *Erinnerung* marks this transition as the transition of being – *Sein* – to the mode of its being past, or having-been – *ge-wesen* – although this past, Hegel observes, is a past “without time” (*zeitlos*).⁶⁴ Not only “essence is the truth of being,” but *Sein* is now *Wesen* since it no longer is what it is but what it has been, for being has now performed the transition into essence. Essence is not immediate being; it is the logical (not the temporal) past of being construed by dialectical memory as its fully accomplished mediation. Thus, as memory institutes the discontinuity of the logical succession it also brings to light, for the first time, the logical (not the temporal) structure of the past. The past is neither an original position nor a point of departure, but the gesture of a return that brings us necessarily forward.

In introducing the sphere of essence the logical-methodological process of *Erinnerung* comes to light in its fundamental structure. (a) This process is responsible for the production of the *logical succession*, which clearly does not take place in time but involves structure of truth: "x is the truth of y"; (b) the process displays a moment of *reflection*: it is "*sich erinnern*" before being the transitive movement of recollecting something (something that is allegedly "found"); (c) logical memory first produces and then destroys a *Schein*. The illusion is generated by the fact that something *seems to be found* as posited, only to be discovered, instead, as being presupposed (and posited as found); it is the illusion that something is different, whereas it truly is the same. (d) Finally, the recollection with which the movement of essence begins leads on to the threshold of the realm of freedom, namely, to the sphere of the concept. As we shall see in the next chapter, analogous moments characterize *Erinnerung* in the development of theoretical spirit in the Psychology. The further question that the process of logical memory raises (after the Logic) regards the relation between the aforementioned structures of the logical development of pure thought – that is, the construction of a formal succession that is neither in time nor in space – and the structures of the historical development – namely, most generally, the unfolding of a movement that takes place in space and time and is the movement of freedom's progressive actualization or "realization." I contend that while logical memory is the methodological principle that guides the unfolding of spirit in its subjective, psychological determination, it is no longer sufficient to structure the movement of world history at the level of objective spirit. In this sphere, memory is replaced by the principle of justice – a principle that is, itself, based on the Logic.⁶⁵

At the beginning of the movement of essence, cognition juxtaposes "reflection" to the claim, "being, pure being,"⁶⁶ with which the preceding logical sphere had its inception. Now, reflection tells us "that this *pure being*...presupposes an *Erinnerung* and a movement that has purified the immediate *Dasein*, transforming it into pure being."⁶⁷ This is essence: it is the recollection of something that has never taken place and has never been there but which, precisely by being recollected, is posited for the first time as something that has taken place and has been there – *ge-wesen*. What memory has "purified" and mediated and thereby posited at the beginning is not the initial being with which the Logic begins (or has begun).⁶⁸ As we have seen, *Sein* is not the result of an act of abstraction (or the result of having forgotten such an abstraction). The reflection of essence has posited being as *ge-wesen* thereby

instituting essence. It has posited the immediate as the result of an *aufgehobene* mediation. Such mediation has been first cancelled, then forgotten, and yet maintained as the basis of the movement. Thus, the claim that *Erinnerung* presupposes being is as true (and as false) as the claim that being presupposes *Erinnerung*. For, in both cases at stake is an illusory *Schein*. Such is the negative duplicity of reflection. Reflection, explains Hegel, "is the negativity of essence." The "determinations of reflection" (*Reflexionsbestimmungen*) "are posited through essence itself and remain in it as sublated."⁶⁹ Hegel calls *Schein* the positing of essence resulting from the initial act of its own recollection. *Schein* initiates the true beginning of essence; it is that to which *Erinnerung* has ultimately reduced being, that with which essence confronts being in opposing *Schein* to *Sein*.⁷⁰ *Schein* is being recollected and recollected being, is being "translated" into memory and reduced to illusion,⁷¹ yet is still identical with nothing – or, better, with a "*Nichtsein*"⁷² placed at the very heart of essence.

Thus, the *Erinnerung* that, at the beginning of essence, brings us back to being is a reflective and negative procedure that implies a "positing" – *Setzen* – of what (being) has been. This is the negative act of "going back" (*Rückkehr*), which as such is truly a "presupposing" (*Voraussetzen*).⁷³ On Hegel's account, "reflection *finds* an immediate, beyond which it proceeds and from which it returns. But this return is precisely the presupposing of that which is being found. What is found *becomes* something found only to the extent that it is *abandoned*."⁷⁴ Thereby the "essential," reflective structure of *Erinnerung* is indicated: that something is actually *found* and, hence, remembered and brought to the light of consciousness is only an illusion, a *Schein*. That something is found as given is the presupposition that *seems* to advance the process. Yet, only to the extent that what is found – and the very illusion that something is being found – is also abandoned and left behind: only to this extent can the process indeed advance and can something truly be found and remembered. The advancement reveals that it is the presupposition that poses something as found: that which has been found is truly that which is produced as having been found. The act that breaks this illusion, that is, the act of abandoning what one presupposes as given and found, is the fundamental step toward freedom – the freedom of the concept and the freedom of thinking.

The last chapter of the first division of the Logic of Essence, which presents essence as "reflection in itself" offers Hegel's dialectical exposition and fundamental transformation of the traditional logic of "*Grund*" and of the alternating action of positing/presupposing reflection.⁷⁵

Erinnerung, which in its reflexive structure has first instituted the sphere of essence from the conclusion of the development of being, plays a crucial role in determining the further transition, this time within essence, to the sphere of "*Erscheinung*." Leading to this transition, the general relation between being and essence is re-collected and framed anew, this time in terms of the movement of the "ground." At stake is the dialectical transposition, at the level of essence, of the metaphysical problem of "creation" already addressed at the beginning of the sphere of being. Just as "being, pure being," in its immediate passing over into nothing is Hegel's immanent critique of the theological problem of creation out of nothing, the dialectical movement leading the thing to existence on the basis of the complete account of its conditions is Hegel's critique of the Leibnizian version of the same problem. The immanence of dialectical memory replaces the transcendence of the act of creation as well as the intervention of external reflection. What Hegel presents at this crucial juncture is the dialectic, whereby the regressive movement from condition to condition, which is necessarily incomplete, is liberated from the antinomic *impasse* that paralyzed Kant's speculative reason. Now, itself an internal stage in the development of essence, the infinite regress triggered by the "relative unconditioned" is one of the forms that the process of recollection takes at the level of essence within the finite circle of *Dasein*.⁷⁶ By contrast, it is *true* or *dialectical* memory, itself the reflective movement of sinking to the ground (*zugrunde gehen*), that is responsible for breaking the infinite regress and for bringing the "thing [*Sache*]" out into existence."⁷⁷ In other words, what Hegel stages at this point is the immanent development that leads from a finite form of recollection – the infinite regress – to the true form of dialectical memory. While the regress of finite recollection seems to have no end in its backward search for the ultimate ground or first condition, it does indeed find its accomplished conclusion in the movement forward in the opposite direction, namely, in the exteriorization that consigns memory to existence and to the action of appearing. Significantly, what we find here is both the dialectic that articulates the fundamental logical structures of memory and, yet another crucial transition brought forth by the methodological function of memory.

The movement of mediation, whereby the "ground" is posited, culminates in the dialectic of the "condition" and the "unconditioned." Initially, the "condition" is the immediacy to which the ground refers as its own "essential presupposition."⁷⁸ The relation, however, is clearly more complex, because the condition, in its manifold *Dasein*, is also the "material" that "*ought* to become the content" for which the ground

provides the form. In this latter respect, the condition loses its immediacy and is appropriated as the internal “moment” of that which is “other than itself,” namely, of the ground.⁷⁹ In effect, the condition, sunk into the depth of the ground to the point of becoming its very “in-itself”⁸⁰ (its “reflection in itself”),⁸¹ now constitutes the “relative unconditioned.” What connects the condition and the ground (constituting the *Grundbeziehung*) is the reflective movement or the action that posits both. Indeed, neither the condition nor the ground is meaningful without such movement, or outside of such a relationship. This is the movement of dialectical memory taking place within essence. And, yet, the positing proper of memory is initially rather an “externalized or sublated [*entäußertes oder aufgehobenes*] positing”⁸² – a positing that is only relative and never sufficiently determinate. Ultimately, the condition and the ground are both the contradiction whereby the two conflicting modalities of being “indifferent immediacy” and “essential mediation,” or the modalities of “independent subsistence” and “being-only-moment,” are brought to bear on one and the same reflective movement.⁸³ This is the contradiction that occupies memory already at the beginning of the sphere of essence where at stake is the relation between being and its successor. On the one hand is the claim of self-sufficiency – that what is essential and foundational reclaims to itself against its other (being, the immediate). On the other hand is the dependence of the ground or essence from the overarching movement or relationship that makes the ground what it is. Now, the activity of dialectical memory brings this contradiction to light. As we shall see in the next chapter, this is the same contradictory relation that Hegel tackles in the Psychology of subjective spirit in the development of theoretical spirit.

In effect, that “being is only the becoming of or the becoming toward essence” (*das Werden zum Wesen*), or the “becoming of being is, additionally, becoming essence”⁸⁴ is truly the memory of being. It is not the relation between two indifferent terms that remain external to each other (and of which one can be posited as more essential or foundational than the other). It is, rather, the reflective movement that first institutes them both as “essential” and internal to each other (as placed in essential *Grundbeziehung* with each other) – being is “becoming essence,” essence is “having-been” (*Ge-wesen*). As a “condition,” being is now the internal, immanent “moment” of its other, namely, essence as the ground. Precisely in this form or through this movement being is (or has become) what it *essentially* is, for example, a posited and mediated being.⁸⁵ This is the process of *Erinnerung* within essence: the

movement whereby being “goes to the ground” (*zugrunde geht*), becomes itself the “ground,” and thereby is not only mediated but is properly “grounded” – a “*Begründete[s]*.”⁸⁶ At this point, the condition and the ground are no longer sides of a contradiction but are “one essential unity.”⁸⁷ This unity is the “absolute” or “true unconditioned; *die Sache an sich selbst*” in which both the condition and the ground now “have retreated” (*zurückgegangen sind*).⁸⁸ The constitution of such a regressive and recollecting unity is, at this point, the dialectical response to the inconclusive infinite progress from condition to condition. In the unity of the “thing” the distinction and the relation of condition and ground are reduced to *Schein*, while the “absolute unconditioned” is nothing but the very movement whereby such illusion is, in turn, overcome. This movement is the “action of the thing” (*das Tun der Sache*). It is the action whereby the thing is engaged in the process of unification with itself – the “*Zusammengehen mit sich selbst*.”⁸⁹ Thus, according to Hegel’s argument, the true unconditioned is not a metaphysical entity but a movement of unification. It is, more precisely, the form assumed by the action through which the thing establishes itself as what it essentially is.⁹⁰ The thing’s identity with itself is the *action* that brings the thing, that is, both the condition and the ground, reflectively together to form a conclusive unity that was not there before. This logical process will display relevant implications in the constitution of spirit’s psychological subjectivity.

The convergence of ground and condition in the unity of the *Sache* leads, however, to a new split and to a new relationship between the spheres of Being and Essence, between exteriority and interiority – the relations that memory is both producing and overcoming. “Thrown in the exteriority of being” the thing appears now as “the reinstituted circle of being.”⁹¹ As much as essence, from its very emergence as the dialectical memory of being, attempts to distance itself from being – to leave it behind once and for all, and to be simply essence – being emerges yet again to remind essence from whence it comes. This is the true meaning of essence as the memory of being. Essence falls inexorably back into being. Being is always present within essence. This twofold relation – distancing, backward-looking to the “past” or ground, but also presencing, unavoidably immanent and resurfacing – always characterizes the double activity of dialectical memory. The only thing that essence can do, then, is to take agency upon itself: it is essence that now advocates to itself the capacity of “letting go” (*entläßt*) the unity of its fully accomplished “reflection in itself” consigning it to the form of being, that is, as “an immediacy that now, however, is determined as

conditioning presupposition.”⁹² This is the first side of the process. The relation between being and essence is thereby reconfigured as follows: the “sphere of being” is the condition to which the ground refers as its unconditioned. At this point the movement of being is taken up again. “Becoming,” which within the circle of being is the immediate transition of one determination into the other, as “becoming of being is, additionally, becoming essence.” Thereby essence recalls its own genesis in order to reach the ground. Such recollection is constitutive of what essence is, or rather has become, at this point. “Becoming essence” is “to retreat into the ground.”⁹³ Significantly, memory leads to a *different* beginning, and the ground that it discloses is a *different* being than simple immediate being: it is, in fact, essence. To retreat into the ground is not to go back to the beginning of being, but to move forward – it is to exist and to appear. This is the movement that Hegel formalizes at the end of the Logic in the development of the absolute method. In effect, the becoming that now invests the thing in its *Dasein* is not the action of “making the beginning from itself as the truly first and immediate,” which we had in the opening of being; “its immediacy is only presupposed, and the movement of its becoming is the action of reflection itself.” Accordingly, just as the “truth of being is essence,” “the truth of *Dasein* is to be condition.”⁹⁴ This means that the immediacy of being, as well as its becoming, is truly “the *Schein* of the unconditioned”⁹⁵ – it is the way in which being as the unconditioned now *appears*. This is Hegel’s dialectical – and also ironic – response to Kant’s antinomy that relegates the unconditioned to a false (for Kant, “dialectical”) illusion (*Schein*). The unconditioned is not something other than, and placed over and above, the condition (and the conditioned); it is itself nothing but the way in which the immediacy of being and its becoming appear once completely reflected and recollected in themselves. Once recollected in the true dialectical way of a complete reflection (and not in the linear ever-escaping bad recollection of the infinite regress) it becomes clear that the unconditioned is, itself, appearance – *Erscheinung*.

The other side of the appearance of the unconditioned – the “absolute” or “unconditioned thing” – recuperates the unity of the *Sache* in which the conditions have been gathered and sublated by the reflection of the ground.⁹⁶ On this side as well, however, the action that posits the unity of the thing passes over into its “becoming.” That unity, insofar as it is posited, is the thing’s becoming. It is at this point that being and essence converge. Both are involved in a fundamental “becoming” that is only the memory of the *Werden* taking place in being. Being, as the side of the thing’s conditions, is itself “becoming essence,” “going

to the ground and positing the ground"; but the ground as posited in its essential being is then itself the immediate that becomes, the grounding of the conditions. Thereby the "mediation" of the *Sache* is achieved. In this way, "the being-posited of the thing is a coming forth [*Hervortreten*], the simple entry into existence, the pure movement of the thing to itself."⁹⁷ In other words, as the becoming of being is recollected through the full articulation of the essential relation of condition and ground, the thing comes into existence. Going to the ground is, in fact, the process of coming out of it, of emerging into existence. Ultimately, it is this twofold movement of dialectical memory – regressive and progressive at the same time – that at the level of essence calls the thing (or the illusory unconditioned) into existence. Indeed, "the thing is, before it exists." Hegel summarizes the *Sache's* logical history as follows: "[I]t is first essence or the unconditioned; second, it has *Dasein* or is determinate," and this in a twofold way, "in its conditions" or with regard to the externality of being and in its ground to which the first recollection of being leads. This, however, leads to nothing: being is nothing, the groundless immediate.⁹⁸ Hegel argues, at this point, that what produces the transition to existence is the final recollection of the *Sache's* being, which operates as the same intransitive and reflective "*sich erinnern*" that opened the sphere of essence. While essence seeks its ground in being, being shows itself to be utterly "*grundlos*," immediate, and merely negative. The only thing left is the movement whereby "when ... the totality of the thing is posited as the groundless immediate, this scattered multiplicity *recollects itself in its own self* [*erinnert sich ... an ihr selbst*]."⁹⁹ *Erinnerung* is the movement of totalization whereby "all" the conditions of the thing, being constitutively interdependent, are salvaged from the dissolution of being and placed into the new medium of existence. Conclusively, Hegel frames the entire development of the ground in terms of the activity of logical memory: "The *Erinnerung* of the conditions is at first the going to the ground [*Zugrundegehen*] of the immediate *Dasein* and the becoming of the ground." Second, the ground proves to be only "immediate being," only illusory *Schein*. In going to the ground memory reveals its dissolving power: far from finding the solidity of being (the reliable basis of a sturdy substantial ground) it meets its own virtual, illusory reflections – "the ground emerges only as a *Schein*, that immediately vanishes." But, third, this dissolution is, albeit immediately, nonetheless still "mediation." It is the transition to a new level: the thing's emergence or "coming forth [*Hervortreten*]" into existence. This movement, Hegel announces, in its immediacy is "mediated only by the vanishing of mediation."¹⁰⁰ Memory "exists"

precisely in its dissolving power. Such dissolving power lends its determinations their peculiar form or “existence” – an existence that is now “groundless” because it has come out of the dialectic of the ground. Such dialectic has shown that the movement of “going to the ground” is truly the *“Herausbewegung des Grundes zu sich selbst”* – once again, memory’s sinking backwards in search of the ground turns out to be the opposite action whereby the ground “moves outwards” to itself and thereby simply vanishes as ground, leading on to something else.¹⁰¹ Only the being of memory is *essential* being; its immediacy is “essential immediacy” because it has resulted from the search for the ground. Moreover, through the dissolution of the ground, the memory of being has found a new “exteriority,” a new presence in the form of existence and appearance.¹⁰²

3.2 Logical memory: the last recollection of being

In the last chapter of the *Science of Logic*, in the development of the “absolute idea” through the structures of the “absolute method,” we return yet again to being – this time, however, to posited and fully mediated being. Although the absolute idea’s return to being seems to connect it to a different being than the pure immediate being with which the beginning is made (hence, hardly seems to be a proper “return”), the absolute method, into which the idea develops is explicitly presented as the circular movement whereby thinking, in the end of the logical process, connects back to the beginning. I have already mentioned the double structure proper to Hegel’s absolute method, which comprehends the two complementary, yet directionally opposed, movements of a regressive foundation or going to the ground and a progressive determination of the logical form.¹⁰³ Now, my claim is that the absolute method offers the logical formalization of the twofold movement of dialectical memory, which has been at work, as we have seen, at crucial junctures in the Logic of Being and the Logic of Essence. This movement of methodological recollection, which, at this final point, involves the entire Logic is now framed on the one hand by the presentation of the “absolute idea” as the unique, fully mediated, and true “being” and, on the other hand, by the method’s return to the immediate being of the beginning, whereby the end of the Logic is gained and the transition to nature accomplished. Since the discussion of the logical method will occupy me again in the fourth chapter in relation to the connection between the Logic and Hegel’s idea of history, I want presently to examine only one problem posed by this new occurrence of being.

Following a general strategy employed throughout the Logic, the absolute idea's first definition is a "genetic" one: the absolute idea is the "identity of the theoretical and the practical" ideas.¹⁰⁴ Thereby, continuity with the preceding process is established. Furthermore, as a result the absolute idea cumulatively recapitulates the whole development of the Subjective Logic displaying the trajectory that developed the concept to idea by realizing it. And yet, in the absolute idea as it obtains from the previous logical movement such movement has not yet reached its conclusion. The genetic deduction – or the recollection – of the concept of the absolute idea from the preceding process is necessary, but not sufficient, to determine the absolute idea to method (or to "absolute form"). In order for this final stage of the Logic to be presented as a *new* moment requiring its own internal development up to the point that secures the end of the entire first sphere of the system of philosophy – in order for this objective to be reached a radical discontinuity must be created. This is a particularly difficult and interesting task precisely because the absolute idea seems to be by definition the "sum total" (or the *Inbegriff*) of the entire logical process. Such discontinuity is, I suggest, produced by the incongruence between the recollected being that the absolute idea is said to be in the opening of the last chapter of the Logic, and the being into which the recollection of the absolute method conclusively arrives or, alternatively, to which it goes back. In other words, the last chapter of the Logic shows that what memory retrieves is never conclusive; that despite its claim to have conquered "all truth" and gained, it alone, true being,¹⁰⁵ memory leads always, and necessarily, forward to a new development and to an utterly new immediacy that was never there because, paradoxically, it was always the beginning. This is indeed the only true memory of being – the circularity of the absolute method.

Simply put, the question is the following: Given that Hegel presents the absolute idea as coextensive with the Logic itself, why doesn't the Logic end with the absolute idea? If the identity between absolute idea and logical science holds true, what else can the idea be (or be developed into) at this point? How can the necessary and non-tautological relation between absolute idea and method be established? If, following the traditional – and Kantian – division of the logical science in a "doctrine of elements" and a "doctrine of method" we want to claim that the idea is method, it can be method only as external form, as a form externally juxtaposed to the material previously deduced in its completeness and adding nothing to it. But Hegel programmatically rejects this view. On his account, the end of the Logic is reached by

the absolute method, not by the absolute idea that results from the foregoing movement. This discrepancy between the absolute idea and the absolute method can be expressed by the claim that, whereas the former seems to be being in its utmost logical truth and mediation, only the latter goes back, circularly, to the pure being of the beginning, thereby leading the Logic to a close. It is only through these conjoined movements that logical *Erinnerung* completes its task, and being in its fully mediated truth obtains – that is, it obtains as implying a new radical immediacy.

The fact that the absolute idea is identical with the development of the logical science (is its one and only object)¹⁰⁶ *contradicts* its “absolute” value – does not constitute it. To this extent, the idea bears indeed the “highest opposition within itself”: presenting itself as absolute the idea is not truly absolute. In order for the last moment of the Logic to prove itself really absolute, it first must be demonstrated that the idea is not coextensive with everything (everything there is and can be thought) and, second, that what the absolute idea is, is not restricted to the preceding movement. In other words: the act of logical memory leading the process back to being is not completed with the recollection that institutes the absolute idea, for such recollection leads the process further on. In fact, if the absolute idea is the highest truth and “all truth,” and if “the absolute idea *alone* is being”¹⁰⁷ (in the sense of truth) not everything there is and can be thought is truth or being (in the sense of truth). Neither of individual logical moments nor of the sum total of the deduced forms truth and being can be predicated as truth and being can be predicated of the absolute idea – namely, in an absolute way. In point of fact, the claim that “the absolute idea *alone* is being” implies a fundamental restriction of focus that radically outdistances the last moment of the Logic from all the preceding ones – individually as well as collectively considered. The absolute idea is radically different from all that precedes it. In this sense, whereas the absolute idea is initially presented as if it resulted from the recollection of the preceding movement (being identical with it), in declaring itself true being the absolute idea seems to have no true memory of the process (of its difference from it), that is, of the lack of truth characterizing its partial moments. At this point, the articulation of this contradiction is needed to bring the Logic to a close. It is only by going back to the ground that the idea will meet the pure being of the beginning. To complete the journey back to being is the task of the method. “Being, pure being” with which the Logic begins (or has begun) is, in a sense, a more comprehensive concept than that of the absolute idea at the

beginning of the last chapter of the Logic. And yet, the absolute idea also comprehends and at the same time exceeds what has been developed so far so as to put itself in the position of uniqueness that allows it to bring the Logic to an end. Its focus is both narrower and broader than that of the previous development (the absolute idea is concrete universality and the singularity of "personality"). In an important way, "*das Logische*" is only one side, or one aspect, of the absolute idea.¹⁰⁸ Even though in its universality the absolute idea embraces all particulars, it displays a "not yet" (*noch nicht*)¹⁰⁹ that now calls for further investigation. It is only in this way that the end of the Logic can return back to its beginning and close the circle of the science – but this is clear only at the end of the story. Memory's going back is truly its moving forward to new determinations and to a new systematic sphere.

In order for the last movement of the Logic to accomplish the extension¹¹⁰ of the logical element (*das Logische*) to the form of the system – and even to the "system of totality"¹¹¹ – the absolute idea must be first circumscribed so as to include and at the same time exclude all preceding forms – so as to be identical with and radically different from them. It follows that the absolute idea as the result of the preceding movement must somehow be able to place this whole movement *outside* of itself. Hence the idea's opposition to "all the rest." The absolute idea is the one and only point of truth and being against which all the rest is nothing else but "error, confusion, opinion, endeavor, arbitrariness, and transitoriness."¹¹² Thereby a first sense of the specific "absoluteness" of the idea is gained – the etymological sense of the *absolutus* justified. The idea is 'ab-solved' – separated and disconnected – from the preceding movement (from the movement from which it results) in order to recuperate it in a new comprehensive perspective. This is the condition for the further advancement that determines the absolute idea to method and that proves it omnipervasive by extending it back retrospectively to the circle that reaches the empty beginning.

In retrospect, the Logic is seen as presenting "the self-movement of the absolute idea only as original word (*ursprüngliches Wort*), that is indeed expression and externalization (*Äußerung*), but is an expression and externalization that, as something external, has immediately and again already disappeared for the simple fact that it is." As the original word, immediately expressed but also immediately disappearing for the lack of an exteriority that could receive it, "the idea is only in this self-determination, namely, *to hear itself*; it is in *pure thinking*" – as that in which neither difference nor exteriority has yet been posited.¹¹³ The true being that the idea "alone" was said to be, once expressed,

immediately vanishes – is still only a logical shadow. The absolute idea is no content but a mere form, purely self-referential “expression” with nothing to express but its own formality. This form – indeed an absolute one – is the first side of the method, the method as formal mode (*Art und Weise*), as modality or mode of being and knowledge at the same time.¹¹⁴ Herein we have the beginning of the method. The logical idea, *logos*, is original word as it returns to the absolute immediacy of being. The word exists or “is” only in its meaning – in nothing else. However, we can claim that *Sein* is indeed the “original word” or *logos* only once the entire logical process has been consumed. Methodologically, this claim is an act of *Erinnerung*. The act of going backward eventually constitutes being as the original word, as the first act of expression and extrinsecation, as the origin of all possible memory. Accordingly, it is *Erinnerung* that posits being at the beginning – and as the beginning – as the origin and ground of the entire logical development. The absolute idea is the memory that establishes, for the very first time, what being *truly* is: word and necessary condition of all meaning, absolute expression of all significations, condition of all rational discourse and of all language that can speak of something else. This, to be sure, is the meaning of the Logic as the first science of the system of speculative philosophy.

Thus, what the development of the absolute method shows in the movement that is both the “regressive foundation [*rückwärtsgehende Begründen*] of the beginning and [its] progressive further determination [*vorwärtsgehende Weiterbestimmen*]¹¹⁵ is that logically *Erinnerung* is not recollection of a meaning or sense that has been; it is rather the first creation and production of a meaning that is – a meaning that is projected back onto the beginning and viewed as something “original” by this very act of production. Thus, the pure being of the original word is nothing else but pure thinking, which is absolutely self-referential thinking, the original word that speaks only of itself, to itself, listening only to itself with no external contact – the only form of exteriority being its own internal “expression” (*Äußerung*). Conclusively, the internal, self-referential expression of the original word posits the identity of pure being and pure thinking as the space within which the entire Logic gains its significance. This is the necessary condition of all exteriority and otherness which can display a meaning for thinking; it is the condition of philosophizing on “real” objects (that is, the condition of the *Realphilosophie*).

The absolute idea becomes absolute method (whereby the Logic reaches its conclusion) when Hegel demonstrates that no new logical determination can be produced in the element of pure thinking. At this point what is still left to accomplish is to turn back, reflectively, so as to run through the entire formal structure of the logical whole. This is the meaning of the conclusive act of *Erinnerung* taking place in the Logic by way of the absolute method.

3

Thinking and Recollecting: Psychological Memory, Personal History, and Subjectivity

In following pure thinking's long journey in the "realm of shadows" of the Logic I have shown that the work of memory has not disappeared with the conclusion of the *Phenomenology*. Transformed into the function of dialectical or logical memory, *Erinnerung* is instead essential to the beginning, the advancement, and the conclusion of the logical process in its entirety. I have argued that such memory is the "figure" that the dialectic-speculative method assumes throughout the Logic once at stake is no longer the development of consciousness but the immanent determination process of pure thinking, and once such determination is considered at the intersection of the two contrary movements of "interiorization" or "going to the ground" and "exteriorization" or in the advancement toward new contents. This twofold movement, conclusively formalized in the absolute method, brings the Logic to its end and warrants its position as the first, foundational discipline in the system of philosophy. As the logical movement goes back to the immediacy of being, thereby recollecting the logical beginning in the end, it also moves on to the new immediacy of nature, to the beginning of the *Realphilosophie*. From now on the Logic, as the first systematic discipline, constitutes the methodological basis upon which to develop the philosophy of nature and, in particular, the philosophy of spirit. What interests me in this chapter is to further explore the continuity that the concept of logical memory institutes between the Logic and the philosophy of subjective spirit – between logical and concretely spiritual thinking and recollecting. At stake now is no longer pure thinking but psychological thinking. And the question, accordingly, is: What is the memory that accompanies and, indeed, articulates the process of

psychological thinking? I have argued in the previous chapter that a common problematic basis underlies the development of logical and psychological thinking. This can be summed up in the notion of “objective thinking” whereby Hegel expresses both the issue of the conceptual comprehension and articulation of being and the issue of the actual realization of conceptual thinking.¹ I have maintained that both in the Logic and in the Psychology such a problematic basis is commonly articulated by the function of dialectical memory. Accordingly, in this chapter, I will continue my argument, turning to the Psychology of the philosophy of subjective spirit. The first task here is to show the way in which the movement of liberation of theoretical spirit is accomplished on the basis of the structures of dialectical memory developed in the Logic, and to reflect on the significance that this has for Hegel’s concept of spirit. The second task, however, is to raise the question of what distinguishes logical from psychological memory – the memory that respectively articulates the logical structures of Being, Essence, and the Concept, and the memory that brings to light the subjective reality of *Geist*. On this basis – that is, on the basis of the logical foundation of the philosophy of spirit and of the distinction between logical and psychological memory – I will then conclusively turn to the connection between memory and history in the philosophy of spirit. In particular, I argue that while history is already present at the level of spirit’s subjectivity as personal or private history, this will become meaningful only at the level of objective spirit. Herein, however, history as world history is no longer based on the principle of memory but, as we will see, on the principle of justice.

1 The different memories of the psychology

In Hegel’s mature philosophy, which is developed on the basis of the Logic as the first systematic discipline and now recognizes the 1807 *Phenomenology* only as its introduction,² the topic of recollection and memory – *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis* – belongs thematically to the philosophy of subjective spirit and, more precisely, to the sphere of Psychology. The Psychology follows a development that takes place through Anthropology and Phenomenology and prepares the transition to objective spirit. It is at the level of the Psychology that the notion of *Geist* is presented for the first time in its most proper meaning: neither (anthropological) soul nor (phenomenological) consciousness or self-consciousness, but *spirit* in the most proper sense of the term – *Geist* as the “truth of the soul and of consciousness.”³ If only for this reason, the

process that we are about to analyze displays a validity that extends to the entire philosophy of spirit. In the development of Psychology, spirit is constituted not only in its subjectivity but, first and foremost, as subject: as the individual subject who has a mental life of imagination, representations, and thoughts, and who is able to recollect and narrate a history that she ascribes to herself *as her own personal history*. At the level of subjective spirit, memory begins to consolidate the subjectivity of the subject, allowing it to identify itself through a personal, individual history. This is also the beginning of the subject's freedom – the freedom of thinking and the practical freedom of the will as individual, subjective will. It is in this framework that *Erinnerung* proves itself to be the chief methodological function that guides the institution of Hegel's concept of spirit.

The first moment in the psychological determination of spirit is "theoretical spirit," which Hegel articulates in the "faculties" or "activities" (*Tätigkeiten*)⁴ of intuition, representation, and thought. *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis*, separated by imagination, appear within the articulation of "representation" (*Vorstellung*). Their specific structure serves the purpose of solving the crucial problem of how thinking, which is free in the element of the concept, can emerge as the result of the psychological process of intelligence. Thinking, in turn, will lead theoretical spirit to the will and to the practical form of freedom. This is the trajectory that institutes spirit in its full and concrete subjectivity. Two fundamental transitions dominate the movement of theoretical spirit. The first, more general, transition leads from representation to thought; the second, more particular, transition takes place (linguistically as well) between *Gedächtnis* (as the last moment of representation) and *Denken*.⁵ Representation is the intermediary between intuition and thought. Hegel places it at the intersection between the immediate determination of the intelligence that simply finds itself in a certain state and with a certain given material from which it depends, and the form of its freedom, that is, thinking, in whose content intelligence recognizes itself as it recollects itself and remembers of itself in such content as in an internal and self-produced material. Through recollection and memory, representation purifies the content and the expression of intelligence as it renders it less and less dependent upon the exteriority of the given materiality of intuition. Recollection and memory enable intelligence to use images, to create signs, to transform signs into words and names and, finally, to connect names to meanings. In this way, intelligence frees itself from the givenness of its contents and eventually becomes free thought.

A sign that the transition from intuition to thought through representation in the development of theoretical spirit displays a crucial validity that is not limited to the Psychology, but invests the entire philosophy of spirit, is provided by the fact that exactly the same sequence, namely, intuition, representation, and conceptual thought is used to indicate and differentiate the three forms of absolute spirit. At the apex of the system, art expresses spirit's absoluteness in the medium of intuition; religion expresses the same content in the form of representation; and philosophy presents the absoluteness of thinking that is finally free and completely realized. On the basis of the development of the Psychology we can already expect memory to play a role in the articulation of the forms of absolute spirit. I shall come back on this issue at the end of this work.

What is striking in a first appraisal of Hegel's presentation of the process of theoretical spirit is that while *Erinnerung* displays a very precise thematic location as the first moment within the movement of representation, whereby it seems to indicate a very specific psychological function, Hegel actually uses the procedure of *Erinnerung* (and the verb *erinnern* in the entire spectrum of its conjugations) from the beginning to the end of this section, suggesting thereby that the term has a much more extended validity.⁶ This is indeed so much the case, that §454 of the *Encyclopedia*, which is explicitly and thematically dedicated to *Erinnerung* according to the specific order of its occurrence, starts out by informing us that what is *here* defined as memory is memory insofar as it is considered "*die eigentliche sogenannte Erinnerung*" – namely, "that which is called memory *in the proper sense of the term*." With this claim, Hegel warns us that there is a memory in the proper sense and a memory in the broader sense – or, at least, a memory whose sense is not so "proper." Thereby he explicitly addresses a point of which we should have been aware all along: we have been dealing with memory (at least) since the very beginning of theoretical spirit; memory was a (more or less) hidden presence from the outset. What is it, then, that distinguishes the memory that we have encountered so far from the memory explicitly or, more properly, thematized under the term *Erinnerung*? And why does Hegel need to address, in an ulterior movement, "that which is called memory *in the proper sense of the term*"? In addition, since he makes clear that what appears at this stage as memory in the proper sense is that which is ordinarily "called" memory, one can legitimately suspect that the other sense of *Erinnerung* is the properly speculative sense – a sense that somehow cannot be localized but is rather systematically pervasive and extended to the whole movement of intelligence. My suggestion is that it is precisely in the emergence and

the work of memory taken in this “improper,” that is, speculative sense, that we can see in what sense the philosophy of subjective spirit, and in particular the psychological constitution of the spiritual subject are developed on the basis of the Logic.

At the end of the sections on theoretical spirit, we encounter another surprise. In the conclusion of the development of representation, in its very last moment, *Gedächtnis*, in constructing the crucial transition to *Denken*, Hegel announces that here is where “die höchste Erinnerung”⁷ of the activity of representing takes place – the highest recollection or the highest level of memory (and we should note that we are still within the sphere of representation, so that representing is not a past to be recollected but is rather the actual and true present within which we stand): as if representing were nothing else but the *recollection* or the *memory* of what representing itself is; and as if there were different and successive levels of such a pervasive recollection of representation, lower and higher, as it were.

In a preliminary assessment of the problem at hand we can conclude that the sections on theoretical spirit in the Psychology display such a variety of uses of the term *Erinnerung* so as to require an explanation. Indeed Hegel himself feels the need to explicitly justify their differentiation. First, there is a “proper” use that is localized and defines that which is “called memory *in the proper sense* of the term.” Second, there is methodological use that cannot be localized but is instead pervasive of the entire development of theoretical spirit; this, I suggest, is the dialectical memory that continues the one at work in the Logic, the memory that in relation to what is commonly understood under this term behaves, indeed, “*improperly*.” And, finally, there is a distinction of levels of memory that Hegel discloses with the “*highest* memory” leading to the form of thought. What is the meaning that we should attribute to Hegel’s distinction of degrees or levels – higher and lower, and at any rate successive – of memory in the psychology of subjective spirit? And how does the dialectical memory at work in the Logic relate to the other, more localized meaning of the term?

In the following analysis I examine the “improper” meaning of memory in Hegel’s philosophy of spirit – improper according to common sense and to the standpoint of traditional empirical psychology. I suggest that this meaning is, by contrast, the most proper and truly *eigentlich* when considered in the perspective of its transformation and use in the framework of Hegel’s speculative philosophy, and when connected to the articulation of dialectical memory throughout the Logic that we pursued in the previous chapter. Accordingly, this

“improper” meaning is also the “highest” and more advanced validity that memory can reach. My claim is that within the development of subjective spirit memory, for Hegel, is much more than just one of the different forms of representation within the psychological process that brings intelligence to thought. Memory is the *methodological procedure* with which Hegel immanently articulates the movement of subjective spirit, consolidates the specific spiritual form of its subjectivity in the psychological individuality of the free subject, and thereby prepares the transition to objective spirit. Memory is not only a circumscribed moment of the process; in its “improper” sense it is the dialectical and speculative form assumed by the immanent development of spirit at this stage as well as the ground or the foundation of the process itself; memory is that through which the psychological process gains its specifically speculative dimension. My claim is that *Erinnerung* is one of the forms that dialectic as method assumes in Hegel’s philosophy of spirit. As we have seen, the proof of its legitimacy as method of (pure) thinking is provided by the Logic. The analysis of the movement of theoretical spirit in the Psychology allows us to ascertain its role for the introduction of the concept of spirit in its first subjective occurrence. In fact, the improper sense of memory is the most properly speculative for Hegel – hence, it is neither that which is commonly called memory nor that which Plato, Aristotle, or Augustine, or traditional empirical psychology called memory. In its dialectical and speculative meaning, *Erinnerung* is not the recollection of already given contents – contents that are thereby reclaimed from a past existence and made present. It is rather the act that for the very first time produces those contents that are then psychologically recollected and thereby exist as given and as past as inner property of a subject. The subject, for its part, does not itself preexist the act of memory but is first instituted by it along with its mental contents. This is the methodological paradox of dialectic: the past – the past of *Sein* as *Gewesen* and the past of *Denken* as *Gedächtnis* – does not precede but rather follows the act of thought that institutes it as past. This act is *Erinnerung*.

While thinking reaches the Aristotelian *noesis noeseos* only at the end of the *Encyclopedia*, whereby it becomes thinking that thinks itself,⁸ we discover that, already at the level of subjective spirit, thinking is presented by Hegel as the activity that constitutes itself in its most proper procedures. Thus, we discover that thinking is *already* thinking itself in the act of constituting itself as *Denken*. My suggestion is that the conclusion of the *Encyclopedia* is only the final recollection, or indeed the memory, of what (philosophical) thinking has been doing all along

its systematic and historical process – from the Logic in which it unfolds in its pure forms, through the Psychology in which it first appears as thinking subject, through objective spirit in which it acquires an inter-subjective, collective dimension and a history, up to the specific philosophical dimension of absolute spirit. What is relevant is precisely the role that dialectic-speculative memory plays in immanently articulating this development. Considered in this broader perspective, *Erinnerung*, at the level of subjective spirit, is not an isolated moment or capacity along the psychological path of intelligence. It is, instead, the procedure (or the method) most proper to intelligence and enacted by it – the procedure through which intelligence becomes free thinking, thereby constituting spirit as subject.

It is to the analysis of this development that I now turn. I argue that memory is the methodological function that accomplishes the transition from intelligence to free thinking, and that memory is here characterized by moments analogous to those proper to the logical function of *Erinnerung* that I have examined at different stages in the Logic.⁹

2 Memory, being, and thinking in the psychology (*Encyclopedia* §§440–68)

At the beginning of this chapter I have briefly summarized the main steps of the development of theoretical spirit. This development moves from intuition to thought through representation to which *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis*, along with imagination, belong as circumscribed internal moments. In this itinerary, thought is reclaimed as constitutive of spirit's being (and of its existence) as that which belongs to spirit as its very "own" most peculiar possession and property (*Seiendes* as *Seiniges*, a position that is further consolidated in the act of a true "*Besitznahme*"). Thinking is spirit's "*Eigentum*" – both in the sense of being what is most proper (and essential) to spirit and in the sense of having been appropriated by spirit.¹⁰ In effect, the entire process of intelligence is the successive appropriation of the material given to it. What drives the process on is the necessity for that which is merely external to be posited as internal; but to make internal (or to internalize – *sich er-innern*) means both to negate the content in its mere givenness and to save its "virtual" form; finally, what is internal must be carried out (and expressed) and brought to the light of consciousness in a new form of exteriority. In all these movements we can immediately recognize the presence and the workings of dialectical memory. The last, highest form of memory (and of exteriority) is the word, the

noun which is employed in an “alienated” way by mechanical memory (*Gedächtnis*). Thinking expresses itself necessarily in words.¹¹ The Logic as the science of pure thinking expresses the original word of the logos; psychology as the science of “impure” thought presents thinking in the process of liberating itself – and of expressing itself – in remembering names and in recollecting itself in words. Thus, in this case as well, *Erinnerung* is the twofold process of a retrospective sinking deeper into the ground, and of a progressive advancement or exteriorization that posits given contents in the “being” proper to thinking. In the objectivity of being, thinking posits and recollects itself and is, for the first time, free thinking as well as subjective thinking.

Hegel’s pervasive use of dialectical memory in the articulation of spirit’s movement toward free thinking has a polemical and critical validity as it demonstrates the unity, yet also the internal differentiation, of spirit’s activity against its dismemberment in manifold fixed faculties.¹² To be sure, Hegel holds not only that memory is not a fixed psychological faculty, but also that it is not a function of thinking in the sense given to it by empirical psychology; it is, instead, the dialectical process that, for the very first time, posits thinking and constitutes it as what it specifically is. Dialectically and systematically, memory precedes thinking, does not presuppose it. In the sphere of subjective spirit, it is an act of memory that institutes thinking for the first time. For, Hegel shows that the act of recollecting something that was not there before is precisely the act that first puts it into existence. This is the meaning of spirit’s freedom.¹³ Moreover, just as in the Logic *Erinnerung* marks the radical separation – but also the deep interconnection – between Being and Essence (essence is *Sein* as *ge-wesen*), so in the Psychology it is memory that radically separates thinking from representing. Thereby, Hegel positions his speculative conception of thinking against the idea of thinking as mere representation (*Denken* as *Vorstellen*) that dominates the tradition of modern philosophy.¹⁴

At the beginning of the Psychology, Hegel presents the “being” proper of spirit as the “truth” of the anthropological soul in its immediate, existing totality and of the phenomenological consciousness in its oppositional knowing. Spirit is now placed beyond the separation and opposition of subjective and objective proper both to the soul and to consciousness and in this way is, rather, closer to the dimension of logical thinking (it is “neither subjective nor objective”). In this way, Hegel explains, “spirit begins from its own being” (*seinem eigenen Sein*) and attends only to its own determinations.¹⁵ From this starting point on, the advancement in spirit’s determination process is specifically

described as the movement of “development,” or *Entwicklung*, a movement that for Hegel corresponds to Plato’s *Erinnerung*. It is an immanent and necessary advancement that has rationality as its content and end; it is an advancement that has, rather, the orientation of a movement back to the ground; it is the activity whereby exteriorization ultimately implies a return to oneself.¹⁶ In effect, Plato’s complex reflection on memory (*mneme* and *anamnesis*) proves itself crucial in Hegel’s articulation of the succession between theoretical and practical spirit.¹⁷ Subjective spirit is now in the general determination of producing its own being – both internally, as the theoretical construction of an “ideal world,” and externally, by claiming a reality that it expresses as “word.”¹⁸ This is the fundamental step that leads beyond the “original word” through which, in the Logic, the last *Erinnerung* of the absolute idea has placed the immediate determination of “being” right at the beginning of the logical science.¹⁹ At the end of the development of intelligence, it is in the word that *Gedächtnis* will meet thinking. While the “original word” is the being proper of pure logical thinking – the self-referential word that knows of no otherness, hence speaks only of itself to itself – the word in which “impure” thinking articulates its expression, brings forth the fundamental transition from *Gedächtnis* to *Denken*. This is the “highest” *Erinnerung*, that is, at the same time, the highest form of *Entäußerung*.²⁰ An analogous transition marks the end of the Logic. The final act of *Erinnerung* proper to the absolute method implies the radical *Entäußerung* of the logical idea to the exteriority of nature. In both cases, Hegel shows that freedom can be gained only at the price of a radical alienation – alienation in nature as well as alienation in the complete loss of meaning taking place in the mechanical recitation of *Gedächtnis*. Ultimately, the dialectic of memory institutes the self (the subjectivity and even “personality” of logical thinking²¹ as well as the thinking subject) by losing and letting go what it really has never possessed.

As much as spirit is autarchically set to begin “only from its own being,” at the inception of the movement this self-centered stance discloses only that theoretical spirit as “intelligence” “finds itself determined” in its physical and natural immediacy, that is, ultimately, puts spirit in immediate contradiction with itself.²² Freedom is never the beginning but only the result of a process. In effect, the accidental character of this “finding oneself” and the dependency that it reveals (precisely in the moment in which spirit claims a position of autarchy) are the “*Schein*” or illusion from which the whole development is marked. Henceforth, knowing is the act of converting into spirit’s own

property what is simply and accidentally “found”; the act of converting the condition of dependency into that of free (theoretical) self-determination. The initial self-sufficiency of spirit is as illusory as the immediacy of its alien determination. The Logic of Essence has shown that this *Schein* is already the result of *Erinnerung*, namely, of the retrospective mediation of being. What one accepts as simply found, can truly be found only because spirit has previously posited it, has appropriated this presupposition, and then forgotten it. The recollection of this (forgotten) presupposition is the “refutation” and the destruction of the *Schein* from which intelligence begins. In this way, the act of taking possession of what is found is presented as the “*Widerlegung des Scheins*”; and the “refutation of the illusion” that rationality can simply be found is properly “cognition” (*Erkennen*).²³

On the basis of these premises, the development of the Psychology opens with “intuition” (α . *Anschaung*). Significantly, *Erinnerung* is already at work at this stage of the process. Intelligence finds itself determined by manifold affections and sentiments. The first procedure for appropriating such content is “attention.” Without attention, nothing – neither things and events nor inner states and feelings – can be (be given and simply exist) for spirit. Set against the passivity of affections, attention is defined as the “active *Erinnerung*, the moment of its own” (*Seinigen*).²⁴ Without active recollection spirit cannot be affected or, better, cannot feel itself affected. Paradoxically, the act of remembering that something is its own possession (or, also, is simply in relation to it) is the way that intelligence has of making its own something that it does not yet possess. Herein the activity of memory fully reclaims the paradox that Plato raises in the *Philebus*: indeed, for Hegel, it is not absurd to speak of the lack of “that which does not exist and has not yet begun to exist.”²⁵ Such “active *Erinnerung*” is the activity of an “improper” or illusory remembering, is spirit’s act of positing as its own something that was not there before. Such is attention: attention draws spirit inwardly to the inner dimension of intelligence and posits as given and found what is instead only presupposed. Whatever the states to which attention is drawn, although attention works on the assumption that they are there already as given, they truly start existing with the act of attention, never before. Precisely this structure allows Hegel to consider attention as an act of “improper” recollection, that is, of dialectical memory. The movement that complements this “interiority” (*Innerlichkeit*) is intelligence’s exteriorization in time and space. Intuition is the concrete unity of these two moments, an intricate dialectic of internal and external. Intelligence is intuition insofar as it

is “recollected in itself” (*in sich erinnert*) in the exteriority of space and time and, at the same time, in this “recollection in itself” (*Erinnerung in sich*) is completely sunk in exteriority.²⁶ It is clear, thereby, that intuition, as the first moment of theoretical spirit, is entirely the product of *Erinnerung* in its reflective intransitive structure. To be sure, it is itself a state of *Erinnerung*. “*Erinnerung in sich*” is the process through which intelligence “awakens to itself,” and through the intuited content, which it recognizes to the extent as it is intuited, gains a first sense of itself. Thereby, intuition takes the place of the mere act of finding, and is a first “refutation of the illusion” from which the entire movement began. Granting a first form of possession of the content, which is now its own (“*das Ihrige*”) as *er-innert*, intuition begins to show that the act of finding is indeed illusory.²⁷ Intelligence realizes that the content is its own content in the moment in which “it remembers” that that content is not externally found but is only intuited as externally given. This remembering institutes, for the first time, the given content as an intuited content. Within the Psychology, *Anschauung* is, for Hegel, the first instance of dialectical *Erinnerung*.

The second moment of theoretical spirit is representation (β . *Vorstellung*). It is relevant to my argument that on the basis of its first introduction as result of the preceding movement Hegel defines representation as the recollected past of intuition. This past, however, in a reversal that we have now come to know, does not precede but follows intuition. Representation is “recollected/remembered intuition” (*erinnerte Anschauung*).²⁸ In this way dialectical memory is presented as the methodological structure of the advancing process, offering the necessity of the transition from one moment to the next. Herein, the term *Erinnerung* fulfills the same function as the dialectical *Aufhebung*, that is, the movement of overcoming that entails sublation through negation and conservation of what is negated in a virtual form.²⁹ More specifically, *Erinnerung* expresses the logical modality of the psychological advancement of spirit in its determination process. On the other hand, however, *Erinnerung* is also itself the formal, immanent determination of the different moments of spirit’s psychological reality. It is, in sum, both the logical-methodological form of the overall process (effecting the transition from intuition to representation) and the determination of single successive moments of the process (definition of intuition and definition of representation).

Hegel articulates representation in the three moments of memory, imagination, and mechanical memory – *Erinnerung*, *Einbildungskraft*, *Gedächtnis*. Their movement stages a new dialectic of internal and

external. Representation is the mediating term between intuition and the freedom of thinking. Accordingly, its function is first to render internal what is simply immediate; then to become intuition of itself, thereby negating its own interiority and becoming external; and finally, to allow intelligence to be “in itself in its own exteriority.”³⁰ The latter is clearly a variation of Hegel’s definition of freedom as “being with oneself in one’s other” (*bei-sich-selbst-sein in Anderssein*).

As representation, the so-called *Erinnerung*³¹ offers a first exploration of the inwardness of intelligence and subjectivity. It is a first rudimentary mode of interior thinking that, in its working with images, forms judgments. In this way, *Erinnerung* constitutes the past of thinking – a past that erases its content and by erasing it constitutes its true content, proceeding as if it had recuperated and brought to light something that has always been there. This movement shows that memory itself is an illusion: memory is already thought; it does not precede it. In its progressive articulation memory appears, first, as the production of an inner world of images and the translation of the content, which intelligence receives from feeling, into images that display a space and time that is the space and time “proper” to intelligence – its own subjective dimension. The “where” and “when” of those images is not externally determined by their accidental occurrence, but is now dictated by intelligence itself.³² The replacement of the exteriority of intuition with an inner – almost “personal” – time and space that this process discloses is a first step in spirit’s liberation from immediacy. Here, we have the foundation and the condition of all personal, subjective narrative to come – the subjectivity and utter individuality of the images being the mark of spirit’s incipient freedom, not a sign of its one-sidedness. In effect, the image is selective with regard to the complex connection that intuition grasps in reality as necessary. The fleeting character of the images is balanced only by attention that allows intelligence to recall them and to conserve them in its interiority. As this power over images, intelligence is also the power of erasing and suspending them. This cancellation, however, is itself in turn a mere illusion – a *Schein*. The dialectical duplicity of memory cannot be escaped. Memory is, at the same time, being and negation, conservation and destruction – *Aufhebung* and *Aufbewahrung*.³³ The negative side of *Erinnerung* opens up to a new dimension of intelligence. Its images are made internal and buried – “*erinnert*” – deep in the “in itself” of the subject so that they no longer exist and are no longer conscious. And yet we discover that they are nonetheless preserved as virtual or as merely possible, and that they now constitute the new, unconscious – “*bewußtlos*”³⁴ – side

of the subject's existence. This is a "deep memory" beyond the reach of consciousness and meaning, yet still existing and constituting the depth of intelligence. *Erinnerung* is thereby the dimension of the unconscious "possibility" of the concept, while intelligence is a nightly ground in which an entire "world" made of infinite images and representations exists as unconsciously preserved – their existence being reduced to "virtual possibility" (*virtuelle[r] Möglichkeit*). Now, in this obscure nightly ground, the "in itself of intelligence recollects itself."³⁵

At this point, what is properly and commonly called "memory" meets dialectical memory. The former is presented as an active "subsumption" that is already judgment – the "relation of an image to intuition," namely, the correlation of the internally produced and subjectively located image to a corresponding external existence.³⁶ The so-called *Erinnerung* is the subsumption of a single immediate intuition under the form of a universal representation. It is here that the methodological reversal proper of dialectical memory becomes fully explicit, pushing so-called memory to its resolution into the form of *Gedächtnis*. In perceiving something given in intuition, intelligence "recognizes it already as its own" (*als das bereits Ihriges erkennt*).³⁷ But this is only an illusion, for, truly, it is the very act of recognition that appropriates the intuited content for the first time. Recognition does not refer to something preexisting and presupposed but first posits what is re-recognized, as something that only now can be considered as existing. This is the structure of dialectical memory in contrast with what is commonly called memory or, rather, it is the dialectical structure of memory, which now carries forth "what is generally called memory" to its further determination and liberation process. In other words, it becomes clear at this juncture in what sense dialectical memory transforms the traditional view of memory as a fixed faculty or function into the driving force of spirit's own psychological development. What we meet here, in Hegel's articulation of spirit's many forms of memory is the dialectic-speculative analogue to Plato's double memory. On the one hand, we have what I called dialectical memory, which is based on the Logic, is foundational with regard to all other forms of memory, implies the circular and reflexive movement of thinking onto itself, and is based on the radical negativity of a total cancellation (or forgetfulness, as it were) of all contents and even of the subject. This is Hegel's analogue of Plato's *anamnesis*. On the other hand, however, in the more specific context of the philosophy of subjective spirit, we have spirit's psychological memory, which is individual and embodied in the context of intelligence's experience of its inner and outer world,

mired in the illusion of a reference to presupposed, found contents that it must alternatively recuperate, guard, recognize, and appropriate. And this is Hegel's analogue of Plato's *mneme*.³⁸ What is relevant of Hegel's exposition in the Psychology is the way in which the two memories meet in the immanent articulation of the concept of *Geist*, the way in which the latter ultimately instantiates the former.

In the movement of the so-called *Erinnerung*, memory institutes spirit's own "property" (*Eigentum*) and promotes it to spirit's external "possession" (*Besitz*) – a possession that, in principle, can be alienated (in the language of objective spirit's abstract right) or expressed (in the psychological language of subjective spirit). In the figure of the "*Schacht*" of intelligence, full of images that the intelligence now has in its control, having reduced them to its alienable possession, Hegel significantly follows Socrates's suggestion in the *Theaetetus*, in which he defines knowing as "possession of knowledge" (ἐπιστημῆς κτήσις), not simply as "having knowledge" (ἐπιστημῆς εἶναι). Plato's image is that of the soul as an "aviary stocked with all sorts of birds" over which the soul has acquired power and which it has brought under its control by confining them into its own enclosure. Thus, possession means for the soul to have power over them, but also to be able to freely dispose of them – even to "let them go free again."³⁹ One can indeed "have" knowledge and can, at the same time, have lost it, being consequently in need to re-appropriate it again. Memory is precisely this re-appropriation that brings the mere "having" a step further, turning it into alienable possession. Intelligence, Hegel maintains, "is the power to alienate/express – *äußern* – its own property."⁴⁰ And this, in turn, is an act of incipient freedom. Thereby, memory constitutes representation as properly *Vor-stellung*. Insofar as the image is remembered and thereby appropriated, it can now be expressed or alienated, that is, "put in front – *vor-gestellt* – of the intelligence." While in the sphere of Abstract Right, at the level of objective spirit, alienability of possession constitutes juridical personality; in the Psychology, the alienability of the content of intelligence, expressed as memory and through memory, first constitutes the personality and subjectivity of intelligence. The role that dialectical memory plays in bringing to light the fundamental structures of subjectivity cannot be understated. The subject emerges in the moment in which a personal set of images is not only appropriated but also alienated and expressed – the beginning of the subject is the beginning of a personal narrative or vestigial "history."

On the basis of the dialectic of memory, imagination, as the second moment of representation, articulates the specific modality of spirit's expression.⁴¹ Imagination is, first, "reproductive imagination."

Intelligence alienates its content of images that thereby “comes out” of the interiority of the subject and is set, once again, in the exteriority of space and time.⁴² Now, however, the individuality of the image is no longer provided by the concrete singularity of intuition but, rather, by the subject, which is the “power” (*Macht*) over the store of images belonging to it insofar as they are recollected in a universal representation and subsumed under it. Herein, the images are disposed in a relation of association. Through the recollecting movement of the “*sich in sich erinnern*,” the rich content of imagination is transferred to the subject and becomes the interiority of the “concrete subjectivity determined in itself.”⁴³ By recollecting itself, imagination becomes productive and is the “fantasy” that works with symbols and allegories, and is the organ of poetic production. Imagination still depends on the givenness of intuition. However, insofar as the image is symbol or allegory, fantasy intuitively itself in its images. “Reason” is properly at work in this process in which the unification of internal and external, subject and object, begins to unfold.⁴⁴ Through this process, the images of fantasy gain a side of objective existence, the content of imagination becomes *Sache* and thereby is made properly rational.⁴⁵ Fantasy produces signs; the image becomes “sign”; and mechanical memory (*Gedächtnis*) completes the form of its objective being and eventually raises it to *Denken*.⁴⁶

In the sign, intuition represents something other than itself: the sign is an image in which is embedded an independent “meaning.”⁴⁷ The productivity of imagination is the capacity of assuming the intuitive content of given representations and to attribute to them a completely different meaning. In this way, imagination is “productive memory.”⁴⁸ We are entering the sphere of language. The reduction of intuition to sign expresses intelligence’s negativity, for in the sign the existence of intuition is erased. The sign becomes “sound, the full expression/extrinsication [*Äußerung*] that announces interiority.”⁴⁹ As sound, the sign receives a form of existence in the sphere of representation and is language. Even though we are coming from a different direction, we are approaching, once again, the end of the Logic, namely, the construction of the space that can give existence as well as external expression to the “original word.” In other words, we are approaching once again (perhaps we are remembering) the space of thinking – both the space of pure logical thinking that the philosophy of spirit has left behind and yet has also assumed as its foundation, and the space of psychological thinking in which the subject now articulates its mental life.

The name is the synthetic connection between the exteriority of intuition and the interiority of representation. As such, it is still itself an

external reality. Hegel claims that the "*Erinnerung dieser Äußerlichkeit*" – namely, the movement of becoming internal of the exteriority of language – constitutes *Gedächtnis*.⁵⁰ Once again, the transition between different functions or moments of theoretical spirit is achieved through the movement of dialectical memory. *Gedächtnis*, or mechanical memory, is now the result of the interiorization of *Erinnerung* itself.

In the constitution of *Gedächtnis*, intelligence runs through the same forms of *Erinnerung* that representation used in order to appropriate the immediacy of intuition.⁵¹ In other words, what Hegel calls *Gedächtnis* is something like an *Erinnerung der Erinnerung* – a potentiated memory, a recollection of what memory itself is (or has been), the recollection not of a content but of (the process of) memory itself.⁵² As is the case at the end of the Logic, Hegel concludes the process of intelligence by an act of retrospective recollection that posits – and thereby repeats – the entire previous movement re-framing it, this time as the becoming of *Denken*. In effect, it is only this act of recollection that brings the process to an end. *Gedächtnis* presents the three moments of (a) memory that works with names (which corresponds to *Erinnerung's* conservation of names), (b) reproductive memory (which corresponds to *Erinnerung* that reproduces images), and finally (c) mechanical memory (which corresponds to reproductive imagination). In the first figure, the sign reaches universality and objectivity of meaning through a recollection whose result is the dimension of intersubjectivity and communicability – the dimension that the "original word" of the Logic, knowing of no "otherness" or being "expression" without exteriority (*Äußerung* without an *Äußeres*), still lacked.⁵³ The name is now identical with the *Sache*, as this is given within the realm of representation. In order to appropriate its content, reproductive memory needs neither intuition nor image. In the name, it possesses the thing itself, which it now recognizes for what it is. While the name is intelligence itself in its exteriorization, the "recollection of the name [*die Erinnerung*]" as intuition produced by the intelligence is, at the same time, the alienation [*Entäußerung*] in which it posits itself within itself."⁵⁴ We find here, yet again, the double process of interiorization and exteriorization that always characterizes dialectical memory. Recollection is a self-reflective activity that only at the end posits what it initially claims to recuperate (as if it were found or given). Intelligence remembers/recollects *itself* throughout the preceding process, or in recollecting the preceding development intelligence first posits itself as the one that remembers. This means: intelligence alienates itself from itself and then re-creates itself in the dimension of its interiority (and thereby of radical exteriority), which

will eventually constitute the sphere of thinking. We arrive, once again, at the same result: memory does not bring to light a preexisting content, but creates a new dialectical situation; it internally transforms the structure of intelligence to the point that intelligence becomes the “other of itself,” alienating itself from itself. As Hegel already claimed at the end of the *Phenomenology*, only under this condition of utter alienation or forgetfulness can thinking emerge as free thinking (logical thinking in the transition to the *Logic*, psychological thinking at the present stage). Memory is self-appropriation but also radical loss of the self – paradoxically, of a self that is not yet there. The memory (*Gedächtnis*) of representation is the loss of the very capacity of representing, of intuiting, of forming images. This is, for Hegel, thinking (as having thoughts). *Denken* is the act that posits representation as a past that is left behind as (only) the beginning of the process – *Ge-dächtnis*. Mechanical memory brings us to the threshold of thinking. It has, to be sure, the same structure of thinking.⁵⁵ While memory deals with images and with their loss, thinking deals with concepts that are themselves “recollected images”⁵⁶ – images that being recollected are no longer representations or images, but thoughts. Thinking, for Hegel, comes out of representing but is not itself representation.

At this point we have reached the final transition between *Gedächtnis* and *Denken*. Herein, we find the same recollection that takes place in the Absolute Idea at the end of the *Logic*. The “original word” is the conclusive and the highest memory of being – the space of meaning, of language, of rational discourse as such. In mechanical memory we find the “highest *Erinnerung* of representation” which is, at the same time, the “highest *Entäußerung*” of intelligence. In this twofold movement, intelligence “posits itself as being [*Sein*], the universal space of the name as such, i.e., the space of words without meaning.”⁵⁷ This universal and empty space in which the name no longer has a representative content and, hence, a meaning, is pure being identical with thought – being that is the same identical void as nothing, the same empty space, for representation, as merely formal thinking. At the level of the *Psychology*, formal understanding and formal reason are now the functions of logical thinking, that is, of thinking that uses (or thinks through) concepts, judgments, and syllogisms.⁵⁸

Summing up this analysis of the movement of theoretical intelligence from intuition to thinking in the *Psychology* of subjective spirit, I have shown that while the methodological structure of dialectical memory is generally constitutive of Hegel’s speculative notion of *Denken* – both logical and psychological thinking – in its identity with objective being,

in the movement of theoretical spirit dialectical memory serves Hegel to immanently introduce the concept of spirit as subject. Memory institutes and retroactively articulates the identity of thinking and being; it posits something that was not there before, that is, both the intentional object of psychological memory and the individual subject of thinking; and it constitutes the sphere of meaning proper to (logical and psychological) thinking. Systematically, the fact that the Psychology of subjective spirit is based on the Logic means precisely that the articulation of its forms is made possible by the dialectical memory, whose pure unfolding in the Logic I addressed in the previous chapter. The sphere of Psychology, in which the specific form of psychological thinking is first obtained, is itself a “reminiscence” of the movement of the Logic, in which pure thinking unfolds its determinations. It is the recollection that, having lost thinking in its purity (or the purity of thinking), progressively re-constitutes the possibility of meaning, this time in its concrete, individual subjectivity. This action is precisely what gives meaning to subjective freedom. This is indeed the conclusion of theoretical spirit and the transition to practical spirit.⁵⁹ This process, I suggested at the beginning of the chapter, brings to the fore the structures of subjectivity insofar as they now indicate the thinking subject in its individuality and personality, namely, as a subject that is able to ascribe mental states to herself, to distinguish herself from them, to express them in language, and to communicate her interiority to an outside world. Now we need to briefly address the implications that the foundation of the subjective structures of spirit through the process of dialectical memory have with regard to the question of what it means to be subject – the subject of thinking but also the subject of action. How does dialectical memory, by instituting the psychological thinking subject, affect the very constitution of the thinking subject? What does it mean to be subject (or to think as a subject and not, for example, as pure logical thinking) once the spiritual subject is seen as arising out of the dialectic of *Erinnerung*? This is a relevant point, as it will in turn inform the further development of the spheres of objective and absolute spirit.

3 Spirit as subject: psychological memory and personal history

To be subject is to have recollected oneself out of the development of theoretical intelligence. The process of recollection, which Hegel articulates in the movement of theoretical spirit, grounds the subject's basic capacity of telling its story – this capacity indicating precisely

what it means to be a subject at its most elementary level. It is to ascribe perceptions, intuitions, representations, images, and in general mental events to oneself – events that are never “pure” or objectively reproduced but are always and necessarily interpreted, named, appropriated through the act of memory-recollection; events that are themselves recognized and reclaimed as (one’s own) memories. But to be subject is also to order the series of self-ascribed events in the continuum of a unitary development, is to be able to appropriate the externality of being by imposing on it the structure of a personal, inner time and space. To be subject is to articulate in language one’s story but also to leave much of one’s being untold, left over to the virtual, deeper dimension of the unconscious of which no conscious memory is given and which is itself the residue of the workings of memory – the store or the treasure of images only virtually belonging to intelligence’s deepest memory, a residue that remains the unconscious possession (perhaps, never properly “possessed”) of *subjective* spirit as it will never be channeled into the intersubjective world through language, hence will never truly become a story.⁶⁰ Just as the dialectical memory that grounds psychological memory (or that immanently drives the latter to its resolution) is no fixed mental faculty, so is the psychological spiritual subject no unmoved entity but is itself an ongoing process – a subject in the making, in the movement of becoming what it is. This process is the story that the subject narrates (as well as the story that remains untold) as it emerges from theoretical spirit and recollects itself in all its forms.⁶¹ In the *Encyclopaedia*, this process is no longer a *phenomenology* of spirit (as it was in 1807) but the unfolding of spirit’s dialectical *Erinnerung* – the recollecting process that has the Logic as its methodological foundation and the movement of objective spirit as its final result. Significantly, this first, merely subjective, sense of history will come back transformed – will be re-collected, as it were – at the more complex level of absolute spirit. Herein, personal history is universalized by artistic intuition and consigned to biographical narrative, thereby meeting, in this higher connection, a new sense of memory and a new form of history. But one can also suspect that this first, highly unilateral sense of history and of the memory that makes it possible, that is, as limited to the subject and functional to its first institution, may play a role in certain types of historiography, in certain ways of doing and writing (world) history. In this case, personal history is the subjective reconstruction, interpretation, or recollection of objective, collective world history, the exteriority of history reflected in the fluid interiority of the subject.⁶²

At the end of theoretical spirit, in the transition from *Gedächtnis* to *Denken*, spirit achieves a first form of its freedom. Although it is thinking that first makes spirit free, “as thinking” freedom exists here only in a limited, one-sided form.⁶³ For, “true freedom” is “ethical life,” that is, fully achieved only at the level of objective spirit. This establishes the further goal of the movement of “practical spirit” or the “path of the will in becoming *objective* spirit,”⁶⁴ the new dimension within which memory will be developed.

Thus, it is in the realm of spirit first disclosed by this psychological sense of subjectivity that history is introduced as a fundamental character of its development. Personal history is based on dialectical memory (as was phenomenological history). However, in its proper sense, history is here only in its inception or in its first appearance, as it is in its first inception the freedom that theoretical spirit has conquered in the transition from *Gedächtnis* to *Denken*. Spirit’s personal history is history recollected within the limited sphere of the subject, not history made or lived in the broad externality of the world⁶⁵ – or it is such a primordial level of “history” that in it no distinction is yet drawn between what happened and what is told has happened: the two are immediately one; the sign is immediately the *Sache* it represents. In the same way, the freedom of practical spirit emerging as the result of theoretical spirit is freedom in thinking not yet in action. The side of objectivity (hence of intersubjectivity) is entirely lacking – to history as well as to freedom. The question that the development of the Psychology of subjective spirit leaves open is whether subjective, psychological memory can indeed move beyond the limits of subjective spirit and become the basis of a history that, in its collective, ethical objectivity – namely, as *world* history proper – does not have the individual as its subject and is such as to display the dimension of universality not yet available to the psychological subject. For, it is Hegel’s long-standing conviction that the psychological subject *cannot* be the subject of (world) history. Thus, with regard to the conclusion of the psychological movement of spirit, the further development of objective spirit will establish two points. On the one hand it shows that personal history is truly grounded in ethical life, hence, again, in “ethical” or “collective memory”; on the other hand, however, it fundamentally separates both personal and collective memory from world history.

Indeed, the development of objective spirit restates the position that Hegel holds already in 1807. Ultimately, what appears as the first emergence of spirit’s reality or “*Geist*” in the proper sense – the thinking and willing subject as a higher and more advanced figure of subjectivity

than the anthropological soul and the phenomenological consciousness and self-consciousness – insofar as it has an objective (and not only a subjective, personal) history is truly the result of a complex intersubjective process. The thesis of the 1807 *Phenomenology*, whereby in the unfolding of the figures of consciousness history was introduced in the chapter “*Geist*” through ethical memory, which in this way turned them into “figures of a world,”⁶⁶ is taken up again, yet also fundamentally transformed, at the level of objective spirit. For now it is personal history, not world history, that is framed by spirit’s ethical life at the level of objective spirit.

While in the *Phenomenology* world history as the collective dimension of *Geist* was rooted in ethical memory, the *Logic* seems to have erased this result, forcing Hegel’s argument to start anew, by thinking of a movement of recollection in purely logical terms – recollection without a subject and without an object. Through the logical unfolding of dialectical memory, the task was to slowly recuperate to the shadowy dimension of the concept the full-fledged reality of spirit. The new starting point of pure thinking in the *Logic*, and the itinerary that follows from it by replacing spirit’s phenomenology with its logical recollection, fundamentally modifies the function of memory in the mature systematic of spirit. As the beginning of the psychological subject and the basis of her personal history, *Erinnerung* can no longer serve as the generative principle of world history. Not the individual subject but the political state is the subject of world history for Hegel. Yet, memory is also not entirely disengaged from world history since dialectical memory does still become effectual and actual as collective memory in the forms of objective spirit, as in the *Phenomenology*. While memory only goes as far as constituting subjective spirit’s personal history, when it acquires a collective, ethical dimension within the structures of objective spirit it ultimately presupposes history. In Hegel’s view, world history is by no means the sum total of personal histories (not even the culmination of the world-historical individual’s personal history); it is rather the condition for the meaningfulness of all personal history as such. Now, this fundamental transformation that ties memory as psychological memory to the individual subject, disengaging it from world history while still preserving a sense of ethical or collective memory, requires Hegel to propose a new generative principle of world history beyond memory. This leads us to the topic of the next chapter.

4

Memory, History, Justice

Among the different parts of Hegel's system the philosophy of history is today perhaps one of the less appealing. This is due both to a shift in the general focus of the current philosophical discussion and to the particular place that history occupies within Hegel's thought. While the issue of "universal" or "world" history (*Weltgeschichte*) is one of the most widely treated between the end of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century, it is hardly of any interest in the contemporary philosophical debate. On the other hand, for general and scholarly readers alike the philosophy of history seems to catalyze many of the flaws that different interpretive traditions have attributed to Hegel throughout the years – from the charge of teleologism (or providentialism) and the triumphalism of a suspicious notion of progress bent toward the superiority of the Prussian national state and Protestant culture, to the charge of intellectualizing (even logicizing) material processes at the expense of the understanding of real historical transformations. All in all, it seems difficult today to take seriously, at least without further qualifications, claims such as: reason is in history; history is god's unimpeded march in the world, or even that history is the worldly realization of freedom.¹ While Hegel's general thesis of the historicity of all human activity and production, in other words, of *Vernunft* and *Geist* – the seminal claim that stands at the beginning of many historicisms, such as the German and Italian historicism of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century – is often and more easily appreciated (in particular when contrasted to the ahistorical perspective of Kant's transcendentalism), it seems much more difficult to justify and to salvage Hegel's philosophy of history as a discipline in its own right, allegedly structured by his dialectic-speculative logic, problematically placed at the very end of the sphere of "objective spirit"

or of the *Philosophy of Right* – hence characterized by a markedly political perspective – and invested with the task of making the transition to “absolute spirit.”

In this chapter, I shall offer a new perspective on Hegel’s thinking of history.² The basis of my argument is the development of the concept of “dialectical memory” and the connection between memory and history that we have been following so far from the 1807 *Phenomenology* to the mature systematic relation between the Logic and the philosophy of subjective spirit. At stake in the constellation that I have pursued so far is first the relation between collective or “ethical memory” and the history that appears in the phenomenological development of consciousness and spirit in the *Phenomenology*; second, the relation between what I called “dialectic memory” as the method of the logical unfolding of the structures of pure thinking and the psychological individual memory that in the philosophy of subjective spirit lays the foundations of spirit’s subjectivity; and, third, the relation of both dialectical and psychological memory to personal history at the level of subjective spirit. Now, I want to carry this discussion a step further, tackling the idea of world history in Hegel’s mature thought. I want to look at how the connection between memory, in all its different configurations, and history is addressed in the spheres of objective and absolute spirit; and I want to bring to light the systematic necessity that requires this further development. I have shown in the first chapter how the ethical memory that grounds history in the *Phenomenology* leads, at the end of this work, to the ahistorical dimension of the Logic, hence is no longer able, within the system, to function as the principle of history. I have also suggested, at the end of the previous chapter, that the philosophy of subjective spirit offers an insufficient basis for thinking history because of Hegel’s long-standing conviction that world history cannot be grounded on individuality, hence, ultimately, on psychological memory. And yet, given that world history belongs to the sphere of objective spirit, it remains crucial that the latter is the result of the movement of liberation of theoretical and practical spirit that concludes the Psychology, whereby it inherits the structure of spirit and its personal memory and memories. The following questions, then, should be raised at this point: What is the principle of world history, and what is the relation between world history and memory in the further development of the philosophy of spirit? And what is the memory at play in the sphere of objective spirit – is it the dialectical memory of the Logic, the individual memories of subjective spirit, their further confirmation and re-enactment within the ethical life of the political community, or what else?

I investigate these questions, first, in relation to the broader *systematic* basis of Hegel's philosophy of history, namely, to the issue of what are the concepts and the structures that make it possible for world history, or *Weltgeschichte*, to be introduced and thought in the architecture of Hegel's late philosophy. For, the claim that *Geist* is historical, namely, the proved result of the *Phenomenology*, is necessary but not sufficient to ground his late concept of history. And I investigate, second, the specific idea of history that arises within this systematic framework. For again, the claim that spirit displays a historical character is the starting point, rather than the solution, to the problem. While in the previous chapters I have pursued the development of the idea of memory in the Logic and the Psychology, I now take as my focus the idea of history. The question from which I start is: What are the structures that articulate history in the systematic development that begins with the beginning of the Logic and locates history at the end of the philosophy of right, just before the transition to absolute spirit? I argue that after the conclusion of the *Phenomenology* and memory's disengagement from history which takes place therein, Hegel's reflection on history shifts from the connection between "ethical memory" and "figural history" (presented in the 1807 work) to the connection between history and justice summed up in Hegel's famous endorsement of Friedrich Schiller's claim: *Weltgeschichte* is *Weltgericht*. At this point, ethical memory no longer channels history in the system but retrospectively reflects on and reconciles, in a memorializing act, the contradictions of history through the activity of absolute spirit. Although still structured by dialectical memory, history now underlies the differential recollections of the forms of absolute spirit. The *principle* of history, however, has become justice.

Ultimately, I shall leave to the reader to decide whether, and to what extent, the idea of history that emerges at the end of this investigation is still vulnerable to the traditional challenges raised against Hegel or whether, instead, such an idea may open up to other, perhaps more interesting, fruitful, and more current challenges for the (philosophical) thinking of history today. I will briefly come back to this issue in the conclusion of the book. It remains crucial, however, that the idea of a philosophy of history – in Hegel's times as in ours – is closely linked to the conception philosophy has of the contemporary world and to the role philosophy ascribes to itself within it. Indeed, to put the point in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century terms, the philosophical understanding of history is a function of the assessment of the "present state of humanity" and has this present state as its starting point.³ As it is undeniably a pressing issue for us today to take a stand with regard to

the “present state” of our humanity and of our world, I suggest Hegel’s view of history and memory carries an important weight for the current philosophical discussion.⁴

In this chapter I proceed in the following way: I examine the systematic framework within which Hegel introduces his idea of history. The Logic comes first; the systematics of the concept of *Geist* follows. In particular, taking up again the issue of the Logic examined in [Chapter 2](#), I start by looking at those crucial innovations of Hegel’s program of a dialectic-speculative logic that lay the foundation for his conception of history, and then discuss the significance of placing the idea of *Weltgeschichte* as the conclusion of the philosophy of right (or objective spirit) and of investing it with the task of building the transition to the sphere of absolute spirit.

1 Dialectical memory, ethical memory, and the problem of history

Let me begin by briefly recalling the problematic constellation that I have explored in the previous chapters as it now constitutes the background of the present argument. In the philosophy of subjective spirit, at the end of the Psychology, the dialectic of memory (*Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis*) allows Hegel to solve the problem of how thinking, which is free in the element of the concept, can emerge as the result of the psychological process of intelligence and be the free thinking of a subject. Thinking, in turn, leads theoretical spirit to the will and to its practical freedom. Freedom, as it emerges in connection with thinking at the level of subjective spirit, begins with the “dialectic memory” that what is taken as given and found is truly and actually self-produced by spirit and and is itself the possession and the property of spirit. This passage proves essential to gain the institutional, objective and collective dimension of spirit. At stake from now on are the progressive liberation of spirit and the progressive actualization (the *Objektivierung*) of freedom.⁵

However, the transition in which *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis* are pivotal, insofar as they lead from intuition to thought through representation, is of much greater import and reaches far beyond the confines of merely subjective spirit. This is confirmed by the fact that exactly the same sequence, namely, intuition, representation, and conceptual thought characterizes the three forms of absolute spirit – namely, art, religion, and philosophy, respectively. We shall see the renewed role that recollection and memory play at the level of absolute spirit, systematically *after* the introduction and presentation of world history, but truly *within*

the reality and development of world history. My suggestion now is that art, religion, and philosophy are, at this point, the intrahistorical “absolute” memory of world history – namely, a memory that is individual and collective, subjective and objective at the same time.

Moreover, attending to the development of the Psychology, it has become clear that for Hegel memory fulfills yet another, much broader and generalized function. Herein we meet memory in its *methodological* function with regard to the unfolding of the structures of *Geist*. This use confirms that for Hegel memory is much more than one of the different forms of representation within the psychological process that brings intelligence to free thought. It is the *methodological procedure* with which Hegel immanently articulates the movement of spirit. It is not only a moment of the process but is the pervasive dialectical and speculative form as well as the ground of the process itself; it is that through which the psychological process gains its specifically speculative dimension and, thereby, the possibility of making the transition to practical freedom and to objective spirit. What remains to be seen, in this connection, is the more generalized link between the Logic, the developmental structures of objective spirit, and world history.

Now, once these accounts of memory – its dialectic-speculative significance in the Logic and its systematic role within the articulation of subjective spirit – are connected with the use that Hegel makes of *Erinnerung* in the *Phenomenology*, a crucial question arises, namely, the relation between memory and history. For one thing, while memory is indeed a fundamental structure of subjective, individual (self-) consciousness, it is also the collective dimension of what the 1807 work calls *Geist*, responsible for establishing the properly “ethical” and political realm of spirit and, thereby, for channeling world history into the phenomenological development. History is history of a people, that is, of the collective whole united by the bond of “ethical memory.” For another thing, while in the *Phenomenology* the methodological function of *Erinnerung* is displayed insofar as “ethical memory” fulfills the famous program of transforming “substance” into “subject,” that is into spirit, the methodological validity of memory emerges most notably in the act of anchoring such transformation in the specific need of Hegel’s historical present, an age of deep revolutionary upheavals in the realms of politics and society. Thus, I have suggested that the *Phenomenology* is itself the product of ethical memory – the product of the ethical memory of Hegel’s historical *Gegenwart*. The final act of *Erinnerung* that seals the 1807 work at the level of Absolute Knowing is, at the same time, the recollecting return to the dimension of Hegel’s historical

present disclosed in the preface of the work (written immediately after the Absolute Knowing chapter), and the step forward into the beginning of the speculative science, into the atemporal and apparently ahistorical realm of the Logic.⁶ Thereby, phenomenological memory leads to an apparently contradictory result: In the moment in which it opens to the historical present it also negates history in the atemporal dimension of the logical concept. We shall now see how this tension is resolved in the development of the later system of philosophy, and what is the new idea of history that arises from that solution.⁷

In exploring the connection between ethical memory and history in the *Phenomenology* development, I have claimed, first, that ethical memory allows Hegel to present history as the constitutive structure of spirit. But I have also argued that once memory has fulfilled this task, that is, once the conclusion of the *Phenomenology* has been reached, ethical memory yields to a different, “logical” or “virtual” memory that brings phenomenological history to an end and introduces the speculative concept, that is, the transition (or alienation, as it were) to the atemporal and ahistorical element of the logic, free once and for all of the opposition of consciousness.⁸ At this point, memory and history part ways. Memory, disclosing its one-sidedness, eventually turns against history. As memory dialectically implies forgetfulness, it is preserving as much as it is censoring, selective, distorting, and ideological. While the solidarity of ethical memory and history is the cipher of the Greek world, their tension and final separation is the character of modernity, the standpoint of Hegel’s present. This is the *Gegenwart* to which “absolute knowing” goes back with its last phenomenological *Erinnerung*. Both memory and history are transformed by such separation. Memory becomes a purely logical movement but also gains a psychological, subjective depth from which its collective, ethical, and social significance must be recuperated. Psychological memory, however, is still the basis of spirit in its subjective forms, and hence the condition of personal, subjective history. History proper or world history, by contrast, must appeal from now on to a different principle for its constitution than to the one-sided psychological memory. History becomes highly political; its subject is neither the individual consciousness nor the free agent nor the (ancient) individual in immediate unity with the ethical whole, but it is the modern institution of the nation-state. Concluding the development of objective spirit, *Weltgeschichte* discloses the reality of contradiction. Awkwardly, if we consider the general pattern of all the conclusive stages of Hegel’s dialectic, history is not a moment of systematic reconciliation, but the realm of wide-open

tensions and conflicts. History sinks the triumph of the nation-state into the strictures of negativity and contingency. As “objective spirit” reconstitutes the ethical context of collective memory – the context that is systematically lost after the conclusion of the *Phenomenology* in the shadowy world of the Logic, and is historically lost after the upheaval of the French Revolution – thereby re-framing and giving meaning to the subject’s personal history, collective memory is no longer the *ground* of history. World history now appears *beyond* ethical memory, since memory is enclosed within the bounds of the nation-state and is unable to transcend them. At this point, the shaping principle of history is justice: *Weltgeschichte* is *Weltgericht*, declares Hegel in Schiller’s aftermath. While memory no longer does justice to history, it is now history that measures the justice and truthfulness of memory. History, whose subjects or agents are the nation-states, is introduced not by memory (and the concept or *Begriff* to which ethical memory leads) but by judgment, or *Urteil* – by the judgment to which memory (and the concept) as well as the states are ultimately subject. History is not a moment of unification, but the dispersive and disruptive movement of *Ur-Teilung*. This is the field to which judgment and its justice apply. But justice, for Hegel, is not conciliation, is not the lofty goal or ideal of a “perpetual peace.” The work of memory, on the other hand, confined within the ethical sphere is not lost. Once world history is introduced, memory is re-framed, *aufgehoben*, as it were, its subjectivity recuperated, its confines expanded and brought to a higher level, its development guided this time by the principle of justice whose only possible realization is history. Systematically, memory now *follows* the introduction of history. It becomes the concern of the forms of absolute spirit, which thereby accomplish the peculiar convergence of individual and collective memory in the “absolute” dimension of spirit. At the highest level of spirit’s development memory becomes ethical again and itself historical. However, it no longer presides over history as its guiding principle. It is, rather, subject to it and judged by it. This is the development that I explore in the present and the following chapters.

The structure of my argument is informed by the very questions that the end of the *Phenomenology* poses with regard to the connection and separation of memory and history. The phenomenological movement has established two results: First, the concept of *Geist*, which is the historical, developmental reality assumed by the “subject” into which “substance” has been finally transformed; second, the dimension of the speculative *Begriff*, which is the point at which the “science of logic” can begin, free of the opposition of consciousness. Hence: how do we

(re)gain history in the system after the phenomenological memory has been left behind, forgotten, as it were, once and for all; after the atemporal and aspatial movement of the Logic has run its course, and the concept of spirit has been recuperated, first, in its subjective, individual, and psychological dimension? And what do the dialectic-speculative movement of the Logic and the concept of spirit, respectively, bring to the new – postphenomenological and postrevolutionary – idea of history? If the *Phenomenology* has established that spirit is historical, of what exactly does the historical reality of spirit consist, or what is it of the manifold aspects of spirit's reality that constitutes it into the subject of world history: is it the individual, subjective reality of spirit (still a captive of the psychological workings of memory) or is it the objective, collective dimension of freedom; and here, is it morality (as for Kant and Fichte) or right, or its properly political institutions? What are the systematic conditions that make spirit's actuality and the reality of freedom properly *historical* – especially once the intervention of ethical memory is no longer in place (or is and “ought” to be discredited as one-sided or ideological) as is the case of the modern, postrevolutionary world?

I will first consider the Logic and then turn to the sphere of objective spirit.

2 The logic as the condition for thinking history

My claim is that Hegel's idea of a dialectic-speculative logic (in contrast to Kant's transcendental logic and more generally to the entire tradition of what Hegel calls the undialectical *Verstandeslogik*) constitutes the most adequate basis for the introduction and presentation of history in the systematics of spirit as well as for the understanding of the specific developmental structures of history itself. In my view, to claim that history has its systematic foundation in the Logic means that it is the Logic and not some metaphysical or theological, or even moral, assumption or goal that guides its development. Instead of dwelling on specific moments of the complex itinerary of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, which I have already analyzed in [Chapter 2](#) with regard to the structures of dialectical memory, I want to indicate those programmatic points that make of the Logic the condition for thinking history and for articulating history dialectically. Henceforth I will argue in favor of the following three claims: Hegel's Logic is the best-suited tool for articulating the structures of history: first, because it is the logic of the transformative process that pure thinking itself undergoes when considered in its immanent activity; second, because such logic replaces

the metaphysical (ontological, cosmological, theological) problem of origin with the methodological problem of the beginning of thinking's most proper activity; and, finally, because the logical movement is a movement of transformation and advancement fuelled by the dynamic of contradiction and the practice of judgment. Hegel's specific conception of history directly follows from, and is shaped by, these three programmatic logical objectives. History is the immanent development of real transformative processes, which display human, worldly beginnings, advancements, and epochal transitions and breaks but is not the search for metaphysical first "origins" or ultimate, unreachable, or transcendent final ends. In Hegel's idea of history, the latter are not properly "historical" notions or realities and do not belong to a dialectic philosophy of history. Finally, the motor of history (and the authority to which history is subject) is the justice done by the power of contradiction, the same immanent contradiction that determines historical advancements.

2.1 The logic of transformative processes

One of the most distinctive characteristics of Hegel's dialectic-speculative logic is its being a "logic of transformative processes,"⁹ namely, a logic that has the immanent movement of "objective thinking"¹⁰ as its object and is itself the dynamic, transformative movement of such thinking. The historian Arnaldo Momigliano once said, "[W]e study transformation because we are subject to transformation. This gives us a direct experience of change – this is what we call memory."¹¹ History, taken in the sense of the historical science, is directly linked to our historical nature. Herein "historical" means, minimally, to be capable of transformation both in the active and in the passive sense: capable of *producing* transformation and capable of *undergoing* it. Memory is the *direct experience* of change. This position is close to Hegel's, who claims that history concerns only that which can be recollected; but recollection is possible only of that which changes.¹² But what is the logic of change and what are its structures – or simply: what is change? This is the question that Hegel raises after he has explored, with the *Phenomenology*, the issue of consciousness's experience and of spirit's ethical memory. What is the internal logic of such experience, and what are its structures once consciousness and spirit are taken out of the picture, that is, once the movement of transformation is no longer considered as dependent on the subject who undergoes it or as meaningful only for it?¹³ If we study historical transformations because we are ourselves beings immersed in, subject to, and producers of transformation – agents in and of

change – then, philosophically, we must undertake the step that leads us to grasp the formal structures of transformation itself, independently of the specific empirical, spatial, and temporal conditions in which it is manifested. This study of transformation “in and for itself” (in contrast both to the phenomenological “for consciousness” and to the *realphilosophisch* specification of change in determinate empirical objects and subjects) is Hegel’s dialectic-speculative logic. While “ethical memory” is Hegel’s entry point in the understanding of consciousness’s and spirit’s transformation (phenomenological and historical) in 1807, after the *Phenomenology* it becomes the task of the Logic – of the “dialectical memory” that is the “method” – to present the dynamic of transformation independently of its object and subject. At stake now is the movement of transformation taken purely and formally, that is, “in and for itself.”¹⁴ For, it is such ongoing, overarching, purely logical movement that shapes the subject as spirit, not the reverse. Ultimately, the central idea of Hegel’s Logic is close to Gianbattista Vico’s *degnità: verum est factum*. To understand what the process of change and transformation is, logically, that is, in its pure form, all that pure thinking needs to do is to perform change. Accordingly, Hegel’s Logic stages the action in which the dynamic process of objective thinking unfolds. It is not the logic of fixed, abstract, a priori concepts disposed in a neat but unmoved “table of categories.” It is, rather, the movement that thinking itself is when all that thinking *does* is simply and purely to think. Conceived in this way, the Logic is both an account of the pure structures of change – is the logical thinking of change – and an account of how thinking itself is transformed throughout the process – is the logical presentation of the change that occurs within thinking. Now, it is precisely in this twofold respect that the Logic becomes the systematic basis of Hegel’s philosophy of history.

If contrasted with the aims and accomplishments of both Kant’s transcendental logic and the formal logic in the classic and modern traditions, Hegel’s dialectic-speculative logic is the only one that sets itself the task to account for the dynamic of real *processes*. It is a logic that attempts to think of change and transformation in their dynamic flux, not by fixating movement in abstract, static descriptions (thereby turning movement into its opposite) but by *performing movement itself*, before its differentiation and specification in real occurrences as natural, psychological but also social, political, and historical processes. By bringing change to bear directly on pure thinking, by making thinking one with the movement it aims at explaining, Hegel’s logic *does* the very thing that it purports to understand. Thereby, the question of the

intelligibility of actuality taken in its purely logical form becomes a practical issue or an issue of praxis as much as one of theory.¹⁵ The descriptive function that the Logic advocates to itself with regard to actuality goes hand in hand with a fundamentally normative function that concerns the ways in which transformations are actually (and rationally) produced. Thus, the doctrine that Hegel consigns to the *Science of Logic* and the *Encyclopaedia* differs methodologically from the development staged in the *Phenomenology*, which still distinguishes the static of the external standpoint of the “we” from the ever-changing, experiential position of consciousness. Unlike the *Phenomenology*, Hegel’s Logic is the logic of movement itself in its pure or purely formal structures. This is precisely what makes it into the “realm of shadows.”¹⁶ The only way to understand change without turning it into its opposite is to take change upon oneself, that is, to perform it. On the other hand, however, within Hegel’s system this is also what distinguishes the Logic, realm of mere shadows, from the *Realphilosophie*, the realm of real forms. Unlike the philosophy of nature and spirit, the Logic offers an account of the structures of change independently of the question of what it is that changes, and what it is that produces change, that is, it takes transformation in the constellation of its pure forms, independently of the particular contingent and empirical conditions under which it may occur and manifest itself – and, first and foremost, independently of the conditions of time and space. Herein lies one of the differences between logical and historical processes of transformation.

Moreover, the development of the determinations of pure thinking presented in Hegel’s Logic shows how thinking can and does change – and why it should change – the ways in which it thinks, how thinking ought to transform itself and actually does transform itself. Here again, the traditional descriptive aim that makes of the logic the formal account of the laws of pure thinking (or, with Kant, the transcendental account of a priori concepts), is supplemented with a crucial, normative dimension that prescribes to thinking its own principled transformation. It should be noted that the claim that concepts and ideas do change – dialectically and historically – along with the view that a proof of this claim is the proper task of the Logic, are specifically Hegelian claims and mark Hegel’s radical distance from both Plato and Kant (for whom ideas and ideals belong to the unchangeable and ahistorical noumenal order). Clearly, this is the basis of Hegel’s thinking of history even before history appears within the system.

In sum, the transformation process with which Hegel’s Logic is concerned (descriptively as well as normatively) is both the movement

of reality's dynamic transformation and the process of pure thinking's own internal transformation. The task of this logic is to answer (a) the question of the rational intelligibility of real changes taken as changes – how transformations in nature, society, and history can be brought to concepts or understood in terms of pure forms of change; and (b) the question of why and how thinking can and ought to change the ways in which it thinks – of itself and of the world in which it lives and acts. This, I maintain, is the programmatic basis for Hegel's thinking of history, both at the level of objective spirit and at the level of absolute spirit.

2.2 “Logical Memory” and method: metaphysical origins, logical and historical beginnings

Hegel's *Logic* stages the dynamic process of thinking's pure action. At stake in this movement is neither an activity dependent on a presupposed subject (a metaphysical substrate or substance, Kant's transcendental “I think,” a phenomenological consciousness) nor an activity dependent on a content (the object as that which is being thought in its specific constitution). The *Logic* is instead the immanent presentation of the process that eventually, at the end of the *Logic* and in the transition to the *Realphilosophie*, constitutes thinking into a subject which intentionally – theoretically and practically – refers to particular, empirically determined objects. A crucial role in shaping the structure of the logical movement is played by what Hegel calls the “method.” On Hegel's account, the method is one with the developing logical activity of thinking. As such it cannot be anticipated nor formalized independently of, or in abstraction from, the activity performed through it. As “method,” however, it emerges at the end of the entire logical movement in the chapter dedicated to the Absolute Idea. Herein Hegel thematizes the structures that, having been operative throughout the logical process, are now brought to light and thematized as fundamental moments in their own right. At this juncture, Hegel reveals that the process staged by the *Logic* is not only the action *successively performed* by pure thinking but also the action conclusively and *retrospectively re-collected* in the unitary presentation that is the method. As method, the concluded logical process is both that which logical thinking has successively produced or achieved, and the modality in and by which all processes are internally structured or produced. We are here at the intersection of theory and praxis (the “absolute idea” is indeed the unity of the theoretical and the practical idea).¹⁷ These two modalities are crucial for the understanding of history on the basis of Hegel's

dialectic-speculative logic. Significantly, there is a *re-collective*, memorializing dimension to the logical method insofar as this is the result of the logical process *taken in its entirety*. Thus, I have argued that the “absolute method” is the logical or “dialectical memory” on which the entire logical process is built and, furthermore, that this same method-memory lays the groundwork of the subjective development of spirit in its psychological memories.¹⁸ My suggestion is now that this memory is, in turn, the logical basis on which philosophy articulates its dialectic-speculative understanding of history (*historia rerum gestarum*) as well as the basis on which spirit itself proceeds in the actual realization that is world history (*res gestae*).

There are three moments of the “absolute method,” namely, beginning, advancement, and end. They constitute the three fundamental structures of all transformative processes. As we have seen, at this conclusive stage it is the retrospective, “methodological memory” of the logic that re-collects the entire movement, retrospectively discerning, thereby, such moments at work in it. These, I suggest, are at the same time the fundamental structures of all historical transformations and processes. The moments that account for the development of logical truth are, at the same time, the crucial structures of the historical actualization of freedom. And this is because, in the first case, the method discloses the generative forms of thinking’s pure activity, while in the second case, history brings to light, in their actual realization, the structures of spirit’s own activity.

Hegel’s presentation of the “absolute method” begins with the beginning.¹⁹ What does it mean to raise the question of the beginning as a *methodological* question? What kind of question is this, properly? Unlike the beginning of the Logic, where at stake is the very first logical form (and the first logical content); and unlike the introductory considerations on the topic “with what must the science begin?”²⁰ which occupies the Logic before the beginning (and is still a question of content), we are now dealing with the problem of beginning once the Logic as a whole *has already begun* – indeed, once many beginnings (or all the figures of the content “beginning”)²¹ have successively punctuated the different stages of the logical movement. Now the beginning becomes a question of method or of dialectical memory: it is the recollection of all those partial beginnings once the entire logical development has reached its conclusion (that is, once those beginnings belong to the logical past). It is the same logic whereby the dimension of the historical present (the *Gegenwart* as the conclusion of a particular movement of spirit) discloses the possibility for philosophical thinking to grasp the

deeper, necessary features of the historical world (its “rationality” as it were). It is the Logic that supports the famous claim of the preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, according to which, if “philosophy is its own time apprehended *in thoughts*,” then, “as thought of the world it appears in time only after actuality has concluded the process of its formation.”²² Philosophical comprehension and historical transformation are never synchronic. The delay of the former over the latter is measured by the movement of dialectical memory. At stake, more specifically, is the issue of the logical structure that allows the philosopher to recognize in the development of spirit’s activity the *beginning* of a new epoch and the *end* of an old one. This is the problem, already discussed in the preface to the *Phenomenology* on the basis of the situation in 1807, which Hegel faces yet again in the preface of the *Philosophy of Right* with regard to the world in 1820–21. The conclusion of this work is, significantly, “*Die Weltgeschichte*.” This is indeed a crucial issue for the understanding of history. History is not just process; it is the structured process that unfolds discerning in spirit’s activity and realization the beginning, the advancement, and the end of successive epochs. Such is the identical rhythm of logical and historical dialectic.

But first comes the logical question: What does it mean for action as such – for pure thinking’s most proper action – to begin? What is the beginning “in and for itself,” as “mode” (*Art und Weise*)²³ of movement (independently of what/who it is that begins)? How does the structure of beginning inform the process staged by the logical movement? Methodologically, *to begin* (as intransitive or absolute action) is the action characterized by being “immediate” and by having the form of “abstract universality.”²⁴ As moment of the method, “the beginning has no other determinateness than this: being simple and abstract,”²⁵ immediate and universal. Once the first beginning has been made (with “being, pure being”)²⁶ and the Logic has developed out of it, the issue is: how should such a beginning be understood – or, more properly, *be made again* – in order for the Logic to reach its conclusion? In the last chapter of the Logic, immediacy and abstractness are not characters that define the content of a certain beginning. Immediacy and abstractness are rather the very *modality* or form with which logical thinking *begins to act as logical thinking* and *begins to know* what logical thinking as such is and does. At the level of the method, Hegel is not concerned with *Sein* as the first beginning (or with the issue of *what* it is that constitutes the first beginning) but with the way in which the beginning (whatever the beginning is) is made in order for the logical movement, and eventually for the end of the entire movement, to immanently issue.²⁷

Dynamically viewed, the act of beginning entails “the instance of the realization of the concept,” the *Trieb* for a further advancement.²⁸ This is the structure that becomes relevant when dealing with history – with the understanding of history and with the making of history.

All the moments of the logical method – beginning, advancement, end – are crucial for the development of the structures of historical processes. In the present discussion I shall limit myself to one particular implication of the first moment with regard to the issue of the possibility and character of a philosophy of history developed on the basis of Hegel’s dialectic-speculative logic. My claim is that, on the basis of the logical method, Hegel *transforms the metaphysical problem of origin* – which has vexed, last but not least, speculative reason in Kant’s Transcendental Dialectic – *into the methodological issue of the beginning action* (or the action that begins). It is only on the basis of this transformation that the problem of historical beginnings becomes the meaningful topic of a philosophy of history that, freed from metaphysical and mythological assumptions, can have the worldly realization of spirit’s freedom as its topic. In other words, it is this crucial tenet of his dialectic-speculative logic that allows Hegel to frame history in terms of the worldly realization of spirit’s activity, in terms of the realization of freedom – and not as the search of ahistorical or prehistorical origins. If Hegel, in his *Vorlesungen*, has not always been faithful to this systematic implication of the Logic (an implication that is profoundly anti-metaphysical, anti-mythological, and ultimately anti-theological), I suggest we still cherish this result in our contemporary reflection on the viability of an idea of history dialectically construed.

The point is that while origins are not historical (they are beyond history, preceding it) beginnings are necessarily so (they are immanent in history’s development). The origin is fixed and ahistorical, even divine or sacred or mythological, while beginnings are dynamic and historical; the origin does not immanently “originate” processes, only beginnings do – herein lies the significance of the methodological beginning disclosed at the end of the Logic for our thinking of history.²⁹ The origin is a detached, self-contained, isolated point or entity, while beginnings actively lead to, and enable, developments and are immanently tied up to the development by complex relations; origin implies isolation, beginnings programmatically defy it; the origin is unique, beginnings are plural, capable of multiple figuration, and possibly eccentric;³⁰ moreover, while originality excludes repetition, beginnings allow for it as well as for variation within repetition. Finally, the beginning is not only a kind of action; it is also a way of structuring

thinking – it is both a heuristic and a pragmatic way of structuring its order. It is clear that, on all these counts, the transformation of the problem of origin into a problem of beginning that Hegel carries out in the *Logic* has far-reaching consequences for his conception of history.

Indeed, a logic that searches for first origins can by no means consequentially lay the foundation of a philosophy of history rooted in the present time, and fundamentally secular and immanent in its presuppositions and in the thematization of the structures of change.³¹ If, however, the logic of origin is considered as the only epistemological possibility for the understanding of history, then an alternative still lies open. This is the alternative that seems to guide many philosophies of history during Hegel's time. Either the logic of origin is accepted, as in Schelling's late philosophy wherein history is viewed as the progressive realization of the Absolute or as the development out of a mythological origin placed in an absolute prehistorical past – and, in this case, it is not so much the structure of history as that of the Absolute that comes to light.³² Or the logic of origin – and with it logic *tout court* – is rejected as foundation of history, as in Kant, who looks for a different, alternatively moral, juridical or ethico-theological basis for history. Thus, as the *Critique of Pure Reason* shows once and for all that metaphysical origins logically and epistemologically lead speculative reason nowhere (except into the trap of an unsolvable antinomy), Kant develops his philosophy of history on a *moral* and *juridical* basis, on which alone the properly philosophical history, namely “prophetic history,” can be pursued. For Kant, the search for conjectural origins, while constituting one legitimate type of history, is not a properly philosophical enterprise.³³

Hegel's dialectic-speculative logic of transformation overcomes this alternative. As Hegel's *Logic* turns the metaphysical problem of origin into the methodological problem of beginning (the beginning of thinking's pure activity), the way of thinking history fundamentally changes. History no longer requires a metaphysical basis, no longer searches for mythological origins or for an absolute first, and no longer claims a moral justification, but instead gains, first and foremost, a logical, that is, this time, a dialectic-speculative foundation. This, in turn, allows Hegel to re-claim history as the intra-worldly activity of spirit and as the “objective” realization of freedom; but also to claim that the subject and agent of world history is the collective, institutional dimension of the political state – neither the Absolute nor the individual nor the *Volk*. And this allows Hegel to reject as tasks of the philosophy of history all searching for obscure, archaic origins, all theogony and mythology

and, correspondingly, as the problem of the beginning connects with that of the end, to reject all ideas of a transcendent end of history. As Hegel polemically claims against the “fanaticism of the church” in the conclusion of the Jena *Realphilosophie*, the end of history – the *Himmelreich* – does not belong to history because history is the history of political states.³⁴ Hegel’s early dispute with Schelling on the beginning of the philosophical science with the Absolute, which occupies Hegel in the preface to the *Phenomenology* (and leads, in effect, to the different beginning made by the Logic after the skeptical consummation of phenomenological history), shows here its far-reaching consequences in disclosing the possibility of a philosophy of history on a logical basis. To begin with the Absolute – that is, to posit a first (metaphysical, theological) origin – renders impossible not only a developmental, discursive logic (which was Hegel’s point in the 1807 preface) but ultimately undermines the very possibility of thinking history in immanent, secular terms; it undermines the possibility of understanding historical transformations in their own right without appealing either to an original Absolute or to a final, transcendent end or, in any case, to an unreachable goal posited outside of history, be it the *Himmelreich* or the ideal of perpetual peace. What the method as logical memory recollects at the end of the Logic is not the first origin – “being, pure being” viewed as an alleged metaphysical origin (or as the creation out of nothing)³⁵ – but the mode in which the beginning is made in the pure process of thinking, so that an immanent development ensues, that is, so that the beginning is truly proved as the beginning of a dynamic process. Significantly, it is the very structure of the methodological beginning (its immediacy, incompleteness, indeterminateness, one-sidedness, and deficiency, or *Mangel*), not an alleged presupposed goal of the process that drives the movement on.³⁶

In sum, the methodological beginning of Hegel’s dialectic-speculative Logic liberates the understanding of history from the search of ahistorical origins (which remains in the frequent appeal to the *Genesis* of eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries philosophies of history)³⁷ as well as from alleged final goals, and instead yields, within the development of the system, to an essential structure of the historical process, namely, to the intrahistorical, autonomous beginning of spirit’s own activity, itself endowed with the immanent *Trieb* to its further actualization.³⁸ A crucial role in the realization of the beginning or in the further step out of the immediacy and simplicity of all beginnings is played by contradiction, the moment of the concept’s split or *Urteil*.

2.3 Logical judgment, contradiction, and justice

Methodologically, dialectic contradiction is the fundamental structure of the advancement – of all action that immanently advances out of the beginning (that is, advances without recurring to “external reflection” or an analogous *deus ex machina*). The second moment of the logical method considered in its formality is the action that advances – *Fortgehen*. This is immanently developed from the first moment because the *Anfang* is the action of beginning *a process and a development*.³⁹ And, yet, advancing is not a mere “excess” (*Überfluß*) over and above the beginning, is not a mere implication of it.⁴⁰ The advancement is both synthetic and analytic in relation to the beginning.⁴¹ The methodological question of the advancement is: What does it mean for action to proceed, to move on once it has begun? What is it for action to be in the middle of its performance; and how does this modality shape the structure or the form of action itself? At stake, again, is the advancement, not with regard to a particular action (or content) or to a particular agent (most generally, nature or spirit), but with regard to the overall structure of the entire logical development that is finally re-collected in the method, namely, to the overarching logical whole in its inner articulation and in the necessary progression of the moments that constitute it. Advancing (*Fortgehen*) is the activity of dialectic contradiction. It is the transformative moment of pure thinking’s action. What characterizes the advancement is the intervention of “difference” (*Unterschied, Differenz*) and negativity, the transition to otherness with the duplicity that this implies, and the “judgment” (*Urteil*) that draws differences and acknowledges, reflectively, that the simplicity of the beginning is re-visited in the advancement as the unity of that which is in itself different or which carries difference in itself.⁴² Although the advancement in its split negativity seems to do violence to the beginning and to betray its simplicity, it is truly the act that does justice to it, bringing the beginning to completion, making it real and realized, and thereby manifesting what the beginning *truly* is. Difference and judgment are responsible for the transformative character that the action manifests in the overall development. Thus, the second moment of the method brings to the fore its properly dialectic negativity. On Hegel’s account, as moment of the absolute method dialectic loses the appearance of “contingency” and exteriority that afflicts ancient dialectic, skepticism, and Kantian dialectic.⁴³ Methodologically, dialectic is the “standpoint in which a universal first, considered in and for itself reveals itself as the other of itself.”⁴⁴ This standpoint is crucial to Hegel’s notion of freedom as self-actualization in (relation to) otherness. In the final perspective

offered by the method, dialectic makes clear that the process of the whole is both continuous (the method is analytic, difference is immanent) and fundamentally discontinuous (the method is synthetic, difference is in the gap that effects the transition to the other).⁴⁵ This, again, is the fundamental logical structure that underlies all historical transition and epochal transformation – the ground of historical continuities and discontinuities, the basis of the negativity and destructiveness but also of the recovery from such destructiveness that often characterizes historical development.

The account of this moment of the logical method offers a first insight into the connection among contradiction, judgment, and justice. As the result of the logical activity of judgment, justice – which discloses the “truth” of the beginning and its necessary implications, but also subverts it by mediating its simplicity and immediacy – is neither the starting point nor the concluding station of a process. It is neither the absolute value positioned in an original moment before the beginning (the Absolute, the Garden of Eden, an alleged mythical Golden Age) nor the final goal to which the process approximates (the *Himmelreich*, Perpetual Peace). Justice is, instead, the intermediary “critical” moment of the advancement – a moment of fragmentation and split in which it is contradiction (not a unified ideal) that is responsible for orienting the overall movement. This, I suggest, is the crucial dynamic structure of the dialectical process of history. Justice is the loss of the innocence of immediacy that advances historical processes. Justice is neither a first nor a last but lies in the middle. Thus, viewed on this logical basis, the historical movement is carried on neither by an absolute origin nor by a final goal (both placed beyond history – before or after it) but by the capacity that the middle, mediating force of contradiction has to produce difference and thereby to discriminate or judge – to be both the *crisis* in the process and the *critic* thereof. Justice is precisely this intermediary “critical” moment that immanently moves on the process of transformation – the logical as well as the historical process.

Indeed, the idea of dialectical contradiction is directly connected to the task of thinking transformation in its pure logical forms. In this regard, Hegel’s *Logic* is framed as the last chapter in the history of dialectic, which begins with ancient Greek philosophy. “One must realize that war is common and Conflict is Justice, and all things come about by way of conflict and necessity,” reads a famous fragment by Heraclitus.⁴⁶ In his view, constant transformation constitutes the very essence of reality, the principle to which nothing existing escapes. Change, however, is generated by conflict, that is, by the clash of opposites and their coexistence.

War is a universal all-pervading principle from which nothing escapes. To this extent, conflict is not only necessary but is promoted to the dignity of a first metaphysical principle next to Necessity itself. Opposing Pythagoras, who proposed the ideal of a peaceful and harmonious universe, as well as Anaximander, who saw the warfare of opposites as outright injustice, Heraclitus identifies conflict and its necessity with justice (*dike*).⁴⁷ In his view, justice is not harmonious and changeless balance but the restless tension of strife. Contradiction does not lead to chaos but to a just order that is the necessary dynamic order of universal transformation. Herein Heraclitus runs counter to the tradition of Hesiod (with his distinction between good and evil strife) and Solon as well (for whom conflict and violence are the outright opposite of justice and law). The Pythagorean tradition is continued in Plato and Aristotle. In their view, conflict – political, social, but also psychological as imbalance and disharmony of the different parts of the soul – is considered the great evil to be corrected by the harmonious force of reason, which is itself justice. On this crucial point, Hegel follows Heraclitus. Reason is justice because reason is fundamentally dialectical, that is, because it bears in itself conflict in its utmost necessity. But reason is also, at the same time, the power that is able to overcome contradiction. Unlike Kantian reason, Hegelian reason does not remain stuck in the standstill of its antinomies. As the dynamic unity of conflict and its resolution, Hegel's *Vernunft* is justice. The verse from Schiller's poem *Resignation* that Hegel takes up in framing his idea of world history has, after all, a pre-Socratic root in this form of Heraclitean dialectic. Conflict is Justice: *Weltgeschichte* is *Weltgericht*⁴⁸ because historical change is produced by strife, and strife is justice. Ultimately, Hegel's rejection of Kant's ideal of perpetual peace has the same metaphysical motivation as Heraclitus's polemic stance toward Pythagoras's harmonious universe.⁴⁹ Contradiction determines the ongoing movement of the historical process, the justice of which lies in the self-regulating development of contradiction. The order of justice is the very order of (historical) change; not a changeless state beyond transformation and conflict. Contradiction is "critical" in the sense of discriminative and ordering; it leads neither to chaos nor to nothingness.

The line of argument pursued by Hegel in Heraclitus's aftermath is defended and developed today by Stuart Hampshire who, on this basis, is led to his conception of "procedural justice" as well as to the need of integrating the model of "adversary reasoning" (which replaces, for him, Hegelian dialectic) with (the anti-Cartesian) function of the imagination.⁵⁰ His rejection of the Platonic harmonious model of justice is

pragmatic and realist: that justice is conflict is the principle that gives the most adequate account of the historical human world.⁵¹ Although Hegel does not explicitly appear in Hampshire's argument, his thesis of the "superior power of the negative" – that is, of the superior theoretical and practical force of conflict over harmony and consensus – immediately evokes Hegel's dialectic.⁵² Moreover, it is only on a conflictual model of rationality that social and political change can be accounted for – and can be accounted for precisely in the perspective of history. Hampshire contrasts the "historian" or the "historically minded person" to the Humean appeal to an unchangeable "human nature" for which, instead, conflict is erased in the ideal of harmony or consensus and change remains fundamentally unexplainable.⁵³ Lastly, again in a quite Hegelian fashion, the notion of conflictual reason to which justice is bound requires Hampshire to overturn the Platonic analogy between the individual soul and the city. Justice goes from the sphere of collective institutions meant to adjudicate between conflicting claims to the individual – objective spirit is the broader basis within which, alone, the individual and her private, subjective memories first become meaningful.

Significantly, for Heraclitus, only thought can grasp change. It remains, instead, inexplicable (and even undetectable) to the senses. For the senses there is no evidence of change in the inexorable corrosion of the stone by the drop of water; the ever-changing river appears to sense perception as always the same river. But it is not the same. Thinking grasps the reality of change by grasping its underlying unity or, rather, its regularity – its *metron*. Thereby Heraclitus solves the paradox that paralyzed Zeno, leaving his arrow suspended in an unreal movement, truly, in an unsolvable contradiction. For Heraclitus, thinking but not the senses can master contradiction and the movement it engenders. Plato reads a different lesson into Heraclitus's verses and draws from them a different conclusion. He overturns the terms of Heraclitus's problem. Seeing the reality of change confined to the world of the senses (when Heraclitus only tells us that the senses are unable to grasp it), and claiming that knowledge and thinking are only of unmoved, eternal forms (when Heraclitus claims that only thinking can account for the flux of change), Plato concludes that true knowledge of the sensible world is impossible because truth is foreign to such world. Since all sensible things are forever flowing, thinking takes refuge in a world itself spared from change – this is the world of ideas.

Hegel's presentation of the history of philosophy in its Greek beginnings follows the development of dialectic from its merely subjective

forms in the Eleatic school to the recognition of its objectivity in Heraclitus. The crucial point consists in the essential thematic connection between dialectic and the question of movement. For Hegel, the problem of dialectic is identical with the problem of how change, movement, and the contradiction that brings it about can be grasped in and by thought. The advancement of dialectic in its history is measured by the position that thinking assumes toward transformation. The issue is whether change is placed in reality or in thinking itself, that is, in the object or in the subject. For, dialectic is the “movement of the concept in itself.”⁵⁴ “Dialectic is itself this movement or that movement is itself the dialectic of all things.”⁵⁵ Dialectic and movement are ultimately identical. To think movement is to perform movement (in thinking); is to accept the necessity of thinking through contradictions and in contradictions. This is, at the same time, Hegel’s rendering of the most original problem in the history of philosophy and the seminal idea of his philosophy of history.

Ultimately, the fact that dialectic itself changes and assumes different forms, hence has a history, is a corollary of the identification between dialectic and the movement of the concept. Moreover, the philosophical problem of change converges with the issue of how thinking can apprehend its own reality in concepts – a reality that is necessarily subject to change since it is fundamentally historical. As Hegel points out in the preface to the *Philosophy of Right*, despite his search for an unmoved ideality beyond Heraclitus’s world of continuous flux, even Plato does not escape this general fate of philosophy. His ideal state is not the portrait of an unmoved idea of harmony set beyond all reality, but the account of a historical moment of crisis and inner epochal transformation in Greek ethical life.⁵⁶ It is, to be sure, the best philosophical rendering of a moment of social and political transition, as it is itself the product of historical contradiction.

In presenting Heraclitus’s philosophy in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel famously exclaims: “Here we finally see land.” And he adds: “There is not a single proposition in Heraclitus that I have not taken up in my logic.”⁵⁷ On Hegel’s account, Heraclitus solves the impasse that paralyzes Zeno’s thought in his efforts to deny movement or, alternatively, to claim that movement as such cannot be thought. Zeno’s starting point is the realization that the representation of movement implies contradiction. Movement expresses both the contradiction in the concept and the reality of contradiction; it is contradiction posited as appearance in reality (in time and space).⁵⁸ From this claim follows Zeno’s attempt to a refutation of movement. He rightly separates

thinking from sense perception, arguing that what is in movement according to the senses does not move according to thinking—in thought the flying arrow is inexorably still. And truth is only in thinking. Hence movement cannot be thought. This conclusion runs counter to the one reached by Heraclitus (movement exists only for thinking and not for the senses) and already announces the eternal world of Platonic forms. Hegel's comment on Zeno's conclusion reveals his own solution of the problem of dialectic as the immanent movement of the concept: "It is necessary to think movement as Zeno thought of it," namely, as something internally contradictory, as the reality of contradiction. And, yet, he adds, "[I]t is necessary to *further bring movement* into this position of movement" (*dies Setzen der Bewegung*).⁵⁹ It is not sufficient to (statically) posit movement. Thinking must learn how to perform movement, how to transform itself. The thought of movement must itself be moving, must embrace the dynamic of the object that it thinks. Thereby, Hegel announces the program of his own dialectic-speculative logic and this, in turn, becomes the fundamental basis of his conception of history. To understand history, empirical reconstruction is not sufficient, for, with Heraclitus, the senses do not grasp change. But a nondialectical understanding or an antinomic reason also fall necessarily short of the task because they are unable to grasp the contradiction from which historical movement is generated. The movement of history must, instead, be framed by a dialectical logic of transformation. Only such logic can provide the principles according to which transformation and change are not only thought but also enacted and actually carried forth. This is the convergence that, in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, Hegel indicates as follows: "History combines... the objective as well as the subjective side. It means both *res gestae* [the things that happened] and *historia rerum gestarum* [the narration of the things that happened]."⁶⁰

3 History and the systematics of *Geist*

By bringing to the fore the central role that the "logical memory" of the absolute method plays in the program of Hegel's dialectic-speculative Logic (that is, by recollecting the movement of pure thought in its dynamic structures of beginning, advancement, and end), I have established that the Logic offers the systematic basis for thinking the development of history as a movement that (a) does not depend on a metaphysical or mythical ahistorical absolute origin placed beyond history but looks at the intrahistorical beginnings, advancements, and ends of spirit's own activity and sees in the political state, not in an alleged Absolute

(or even in the *Volk*) the subject of such activity, and (b) is not teleologically oriented toward or moved by a unified final goal placed at the end of history (an ethico-theological, providential goal, the *Himmelreich*, or even the ideal of perpetual peace or of a universal consensus) but is fuelled instead by the immanent dynamic force of contradiction; (c) finally, I suggested that contradiction, that is, the mediating moment of negativity and difference, the *Urteil* of the concept, is the immanent “authority” that decides on the “justice” of the process, that is, of its necessity for the overall immanent, that is, self-generated, advancement of the movement. We need now turn to the philosophy of spirit and see how the Logic informs the systematics of spirit in its historical development. Herein *Weltgeschichte* is famously the conclusive moment of the philosophy of objective spirit, or the *Philosophy of Right*, and is properly – and problematically – a moment of tense transition rather than the reconciled (and conciliatory) culmination of such movement. Henceforth I shall defend the following two claims. First, I argue that in the late systematics of spirit, history is introduced and structured by the idea of justice, which, as I have suggested above, is closely linked to the idea of logical contradiction as that which produces the advancement of all transformative processes as such. In Heraclitean fashion, justice is the objective incarnation and realization of the power of contradiction. Second, I argue that in the late system the relationship between memory and history is overturned if compared to the *Phenomenology*. While in 1807 history is channeled by “ethical memory” into the development of the experience of consciousness or spirit, in the later system, on the basis of the conclusion of the Logic (the “logical memory” of method), history appears as world history, truly connected to the actualization of spirit’s freedom, only once the ethical sphere of objective spirit has been fully developed. However, the burden of disclosing the *historical* dimension of the process no longer falls on ethical memory but on the idea of justice. My suggestion, however, is that as world history makes the transition to absolute spirit, the task of articulating the historical memory of spirit is passed on to its forms, namely art, religion, and philosophy. In this way, I attempt to clarify two systematic problems that many interpreters have raised with regard to Hegel’s philosophy of spirit: on the one hand, the issue of the position of *Weltgeschichte* at the end of the philosophy of objective spirit; on the other hand, the issue of the legitimacy of the forms of absolute spirit as placed after and above objective spirit.⁶¹

Two ideas characterize Hegel’s late thought on *Weltgeschichte* in relation to contemporary philosophies of history and to his earlier formulations

of the same problem, namely, as we have seen, the idea that the subject or agent of history is the nation-state, and the connected idea that world history is, systematically, the conclusion of the *Philosophy of Right*, the field of open and unresolved confrontation among independent nation-states. I have suggested above that the systematic reason why *Weltgeschichte* must be thought in this way is that its basis is no longer a phenomenology of spirit (which leads to a phenomenological account of history) but the dialectic-speculative Logic. That history is guided by the principle of justice – by the justice of contradiction, as I have argued – follows precisely from this connection.

The position of history within the system of philosophy is a problem for Hegel from early on. In the Jena period, the question assumes a twofold form. For one thing, in the years 1803–06, Hegel uses the term *Geist* to designate the collective unity of a “people” (*Volk*) and its role as the agent of history (this is the case even when he speaks, in this period, of “absolute spirit”). In its activity, spirit is seen at work as “alienated” in the objective world of the state and political institutions from which it rises in its attempts to re-gain the unity of the internal and the external worlds. The “spirit of the world” works for universal history which, in turn, develops within the sphere of *Sittlichkeit*. History is the dimension in which the singularity of a people eventually attains universal significance through its action. For another thing, since history expresses for Hegel the peculiar life of spirit, and spirit is essentially consciousness, history receives, in consciousness, its most proper foundation. History is, therefore, “history of consciousness.”⁶² Moreover, since philosophy is spirit’s highest form of activity, namely, self-reflection and self-cognition, the history of consciousness is ultimately identical with the history of philosophy.⁶³ Both lines of thought – the one that sees history as belonging to the ethical development of spirit and, hence, to its practical dimension, having the *Volk* as its agent, and the one that stresses instead the theoretical import of spirit’s activity and connects it to the development of philosophy, having consciousness as its subject – are closely linked, in the crucial years 1805–07, to the project of a “phenomenology of spirit.” After the 1807 *Phenomenology*, the uncertainty with regard to the placement of history within the system occupies Hegel again in the Nürnberg lectures held between 1808 and 1816 (and posthumously published as *Philosophische Propädeutik*). Herein Hegel renders the “conceptual/conceptualized history” (*begriffene Geschichte*) mentioned at the end of the *Phenomenology* alternatively as “philosophical history” (*philosophische Geschichte*) and as “philosophical view of history” (*philosophische Ansicht der Geschichte*). The former emerges at the conclusion of

the development of the state and is opposed to the merely “historical history” (*historische Geschichte*),⁶⁴ the latter, instead, is tentatively placed within the “science of religion.”⁶⁵ This asset anticipates the later reflection on history at the intersection of objective and absolute spirit, while the connection between history and consciousness leads Hegel to the later reflection on psychological memory and personal history in the philosophy of subjective spirit. In both cases – for the “*philosophische Geschichte*” and the “*philosophische Ansicht der Geschichte*” – Hegel does not merely emphasize the way in which the topic of history must be taken up in the system of philosophy, namely, in a philosophical and conceptual rather than simply historical-chronological and empirical way. What changes, in the two perspectives, is not only the *form* but the very *content* of what is to be called *Geschichte*. The “historical history” goes only as far as detecting the contingent development of a people in its individuality, whereas “philosophical history,” and it alone, rises to the “universal spirit of the world” (*allgemeiner Weltgeist*) as the true agent of historical events. Accordingly, only this last form of history can properly be called *Weltgeschichte*. For, it is in this case only that history expands in space in order to cover a universal context and extends in time in order to embrace a discrete process that evolves through different “stages” (*Stufen*) or epochs.⁶⁶ In other words, only the latter perspective allows one to detect the dynamic structures of history and to articulate the inner logic that underlies them. In this connection, Hegel mentions two characteristics of world history. He contends, first, that not all the people who have a “historical history” belong to world history; and he claims that, unlike the contingency of the mere succession of events in time, the succession of the peoples in world history is strictly necessary.⁶⁷ While the idea of a logical basis of history allows Hegel to pinpoint the crucial nature of historical transformation, the problem of the subject, or agent, of history is still at this time undecided.

In this period, Hegel still hesitates in locating the philosophical-conceptual history either at the end of “practical spirit” (which later will be objective spirit) or within the doctrine of religion where the idea of providence (*Vorsehung*) is discussed (in this case history is seen as a moment of “pure spirit,” the later absolute spirit). It is only with the 1817 *Encyclopedia* that he clearly embraces the first suggestion: *Weltgeschichte* is recognized as the last moment of objective spirit, building the transition to absolute spirit. As the concept splits into judgment, the reality of the state, itself the culmination of the sphere of ethical life, expands (or alienates itself) into world history. The moving force is the negativity of war to which the sphere of international justice and law is connected.

Set against the condition of war, however, international justice remains a mere “ought to,” devoid of the “true actuality” displayed, instead, by war.⁶⁸ Since it is its *conceptual* or rational dimension that allows history to be seen in the extension of *world history* overstepping the limits of the national state, what guides Hegel in this systematic decision is, I suggest, the idea of developing history on the basis of the dialectic-speculative method. And, yet, as *Weltgeschichte* becomes the last moment of objective spirit, the second possibility, namely, the idea of developing the philosophical history within absolute spirit is not entirely abandoned. Philosophical history gives rise, for Hegel, to *both* a philosophy of history *and* a history of the absolute forms of spirit (and eventually to the history of philosophy which is, significantly, incorporated into or developed in parallel with the Logic).⁶⁹ In the 1830 *Encyclopaedia* Hegel brings the perspective of “*begriffene Geschichte*” or philosophical history so close to the activity of objective spirit as to define spirit itself as “thinking spirit of world history” (*denkende Geist der Weltgeschichte*). World history is the highest “action” of objective spirit. In this activity, however, the “thinking spirit of world history” reaches its metamorphosis and becomes “knowing of absolute spirit” (*Wissen des absoluten Geistes*).⁷⁰ It is in history and through the *activity* of history that objective spirit gains *knowledge* of itself and *recollects* itself as absolute spirit consigning its knowledge to the memories of absolute spirit.

3.1 History and justice

The difficulties met by the conclusion of the sphere of *Sittlichkeit* with *Weltgeschichte* (in the *Philosophy of Right*, “C. Die Weltgeschichte”) are well known.⁷¹ The field of world history seems to represent an abrupt interruption – even a reversal – in the ascending structure of the progress of freedom from the level of “abstract right” through “morality” up to the different moments of “ethical life.” Already in the confrontation among autonomous states (*Völkerrecht*) right loses its power of actuality, sinks back to the level of a mere *Sollen*,⁷² and is constantly undermined by contingency,⁷³ while the anarchy of a renewed state of nature seems to propose, yet again, the resurgent condition of abstract right. Given this situation, how can Hegel possibly attribute to world history the function of establishing the last “judgment” regarding what is the highest and absolute level of right, the most advanced development of freedom?⁷⁴ How can the *impasse* of an unreconciled confrontation between nature and freedom, which characterizes world history at this point, be proposed as closure for the ascending realization of freedom and considered the ultimate *Weltgericht*? Hegel’s systematic choice has

often been discussed (and rejected) on the ground of the political and ideological implications of its content (among others, the idolization of history; the apotheosis of German civilization). Leaving this discussion aside, and following the argument I have sustained so far, I want to concentrate, instead, on the architectonic and logical aspects of the problem. I am interested in the conceptual nature of the figure of history introduced by Hegel at this point. What can we infer with regard to Hegel's idea of world history from the fact of its systematic placement and from the logic that such placement suggests history follows. My suggestion is that, framed as *Weltgericht*, world history fulfills the same function in the conclusion of the sphere of objective spirit that the absolute method fulfills in the conclusion of the logic.

The general question, which Hegel faced already in the *Phenomenology*, regards the conditions that structure a process as *historical*, making the movement of *Entwicklung*, which both in the Logic and in the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit, and all along in the *Philosophy of Right* was atemporal and nonhistorical, into the development in time that is world history. In other words, what is it that transforms, alternatively, a discrete number of successive empirical events or a logical moment in the development of the concept of right into an *epoch* of world history? What is the systematic principle (*Prinzip*) of history? Ethical memory offered the solution of the problem in the *Phenomenology*. The idea of historical justice, whereby *Weltgeschichte* in all its contradictory tensions is framed as *Weltgericht* (and placed above international justice), is the solution in Hegel's late system. As the political state becomes the agent and subject of history the traditional idea of God's final judgment is secularized in the idea of historical justice,⁷⁵ which now becomes the principle responsible for the immanent generation and "partition" of the historical process, that is, for the historical periodization that concludes the *Philosophy of Right*.⁷⁶ On the basis of the dialectical method, the immanent partition/periodization of the process generates the process itself as the totality of history. Significantly, the partition/periodization does not presuppose history, but first establishes a temporal sequence *as world history*. The tribunal that judges the actions of the states on the world scene is no longer placed beyond history but is now history itself. Historical justice is the immanent principle of historical judgment, that is, the principle on which the advancement of the process is made. Here, again, the structure of history leads us back to the logic of the process. For, the *Weltgericht* of history neither reflects a divine providential order nor dictates ideal conditions of ethical or international justice (for the pursuit, for example, of perpetual peace – this, for Hegel,

always remains an unreal *Sollen*). Its function is, instead, to indicate the conditions under which alone the historical process can advance as the immanent process of freedom's realization (and is not stalled, for example, or pushed back to preceding stages or forced into sterile repetitions of the same errors). Because of its logical basis, history's justice is neither theological nor moral but is pragmatic, worldly justice. Just is that stage of the process which allows for, and actually accomplishes, the *historical advancement* within the totality of *Weltgeschichte*.⁷⁷ Justice does not consist in following immutable, ahistorical (or a priori) principles; it is rather the result of the process in which contradictory possibilities have been tested in their real capacity to produce change, that is, ultimately, to *advance* freedom. Justice is the "*method*" of advancement. Justice does not precede the historical event; just is the historical moment to which the process of advancement has led.

The introductory remarks with which Hegel comments upon his divisions of the different parts of the system are relevant in this connection. The philosophical "partition" (*Einteilung*) is always and necessarily only the anticipation of what is yet to come; and since what is yet to come can make sense only when it actually comes (i.e., in its actualized reality or *Wirklichkeit*), those anticipations hardly make sense at the *beginning* of the process that they anticipate. Yet, they are necessary to the development of the whole, for the partition is the internal "presupposition"⁷⁸ of the entire movement. On the other hand, it is significant that the anticipation, as such, rests on the working of memory and belongs to its circle; it is a memory that logically extends forward; its content is none other than what memory lends to it.⁷⁹ Moreover, all partition is merely "provisional" (*vorläufig*). Its possibility rests on the fact that the author already possesses knowledge of the science whose division is provided, and hence is able to present "historically" (*historisch*)⁸⁰ the process in which science immanently constitutes itself. In its most proper sense, however, *Einteilung* is identical with the immanent movement of self-development and self-determination of the whole. This is, Hegel argues, both the definition and the justification of the philosophical partition.⁸¹ In sum, there are two meanings of a partition for Hegel. The first is that of a merely provisional *Historie* of the process that, by way of an external description of temporally successive stages, anticipates the movement of the whole. The second meaning is given by this very movement itself: partition is the immanent law that constitutes the process as a whole (and the whole as a process) by articulating it in its stages – it is, accordingly, "method," the final recollection of the whole. These two meanings of *Einteilung* parallel the two forms of *Geschichte* – the historical

and the philosophical history – distinguished by Hegel already in his Nürnberg lectures. On a methodological level, Hegel maintains that it is only the concept (*Begriff*) that can be divided, or that *Einteilung* can only be the partition of the concept – for, the partition “lies in the concept itself” as that which defines it and constitutes it in its most proper activity. Correspondingly, in its partition the concept produces its self-determination. More precisely, in the partition determination is presented as fully developed, displayed (*entwickelt*), and completely and autonomously posited. And since the partition provides the proper determination of the concept as that through which it distinguishes itself from anything else, partition always expresses the moment of difference. *Einteilung* is for Hegel *Ur-teilung*. It is the concept’s act of (self-) judgment (*Urteil*).⁸²

This merely logical and methodological feature of philosophical division or partition plays a crucial role when enacted on the scene of the actuality of objective spirit – when that which is divided is the fully realized concept of *Sittlichkeit*. Herein judgment is pronounced from that “court of justice” or *Weltgericht* that is *Weltgeschichte*. History is the final enactment or actual execution or realization of the partition of the concept of right. This judgment provides the methodological “turning point” whereby the *Philosophy of Right* is brought to its conclusion.⁸³ If Hegel’s reformulation of Schiller’s verse in R340 secularizes an old (biblical) tradition, the possibility of referring world history to an act of judgment that brings about justice responds, in the first place, to the internal methodological architecture of objective spirit, that is, ultimately, to the logical foundation of the philosophy of spirit.⁸⁴ I suggest that, whereas Hegel explicitly discusses the notion of *Einteilung* only in the introductions of his works,⁸⁵ as he presents the provisional division of the matter, this notion belongs to the actual practice of the dialectical method itself. Now history is the actual practice of the dialectical method in the element of existence, i.e., in the contingency of space and time, a practice that occurs once at stake is the articulation of the objective reality of spirit, and once the subject or agent of history, that is, the authority enacting that judgment is the political state as the culmination of the sphere of *Sittlichkeit*. For, history is spirit’s most proper “act” (*Tat*)⁸⁶ in the “element” of ethical actuality; while the political state, whose activity is now projected toward the outside in the confrontation with other states, is its agent.⁸⁷ What makes the state – and the succession of the world-historical “realms” (*Reiche*) under the lead of a particular, historically determinate state or *Völkergeist*⁸⁸ – the subject of historical judgment/justice is not its moral, cultural or theological authority or an alleged superiority, but a logical

necessity. It is the conceptual *Einteilung* of the fully developed *concept* of *Sittlichkeit* that structures the historical process laboring on the production of discrete differences and determinations, thereby instituting world history as the “tribunal”⁸⁹ that pronounces the historical judgment. Importantly, Hegel argues that the court of judgment of world history is not the “tribunal of spirit’s power” (*Macht*), namely, the “irrational necessity of blind destiny,” but the rationality and necessity that arise “from the *concept*” and are accordingly related to the “development [*Entwicklung*] of freedom.”⁹⁰ Appearing to the tribunal of history, the state as the full realization of the “ethical idea”⁹¹ brings to fruition that element of historical memory that it carries in itself from the very beginning (systematically, in its first emergence in the *Philosophy of Right*, historically, in the Greek *polis*). While the external conflict of war and the realm of international right constitute the outer dimension to which the development of the idea of the state ultimately leads, its inner dimension is embodied in the “Penates,” observes Hegel, curiously juxtaposing Athens and Rome in first introducing the concept of the state and then, finally, in bringing the state to the tribunal of world history.⁹² The Penates conserve the inner, living memory of a private as well as public tradition and express the collective idea of the “spirit of a people,” but also the individual dimension of “political virtue” and the individual’s participation in the ends of the ethical whole. At the level of world history, in the judgment that is history itself, as spirit acquires a universal breath in its existence, the Penates maintain the memory of the particularity that characterizes each state – a moment that in the judgment of history is conserved as something “ideal.”⁹³

Thus, *Geschichte* as “*begriffene Geschichte*” – or history guided and structured by the concept – is the philosophical comprehension of history reached through the enactment of the dialectical method. In it, the cognitive and the practical-pragmatic meanings of history converge. This act of comprehension is spirit’s own “*Auslegung* and *Verwirklichung*”⁹⁴ which, in turn, is the act through which world history, itself, is made (respectively, as *historia rerum gestarum* in spirit’s exposition and self-interpretation or *Auslegung*, and as *res gestae* in spirit’s “realization”). Again, the generative principle of history does not lie beyond history (before or after it) but is the very act of its immanent production – and this is the theoretical as well as practical activity of judgment and contradiction.⁹⁵ My claim is that at the end of the *Philosophy of Right* world history plays a role analogous to the role played by the “absolute method” at the end of the *Logic*. In both cases Hegel attempts to provide a law of movement by generating the movement

itself. This movement is the discrete sequence: beginning-advance-ment-end. In its pure formality, this sequence is the logical method. In its historical realization, this same sequence yields the periodization, or the partition, of world history.⁹⁶ Far from pleading for a reduction of history to logic, this claim implies that Hegel's dialectical method is not a merely theoretical procedure but is rather, as history shows, a form of practical activity: *Ent-schluß*, the "decision" to be in the externality of space and time, as Hegel suggests at the end of the *Logic* – the most proper "*Tat*" or action of spirit's judgment (*Urteil*) within the realm of natural and spiritual existence, of "geographical and anthropological existence," as he maintains at the end of the *Philosophy of Right*.⁹⁷ As is the case with the end of the *Logic*, in the sphere of objective spirit the external conditions of space and time are introduced in the point in which the systematic sphere closes its circle and goes back to its beginning. The action whereby spirit grasps and comprehends (the act of *Erfassen*, which is spirit's most proper "being" and its "principle") is, at the same time, the movement of its "*Entäußerung*" and "*Übergang*,"⁹⁸ – the movement of externalization and even alienation that, for Hegel, always complements *Erinnerung*. This twofold process is world history. Accordingly, the level of world history already discloses the dimension of absolute spirit.⁹⁹ This movement (we now recognize it) implies an act of dialectical memory.

To conclude on this point, what is, in sum, the "justice" that, replacing the "ethical memory" of the *Phenomenology*, now guides the unfolding of world history and lends it its distinctive structure? I have suggested that once history receives a logical foundation in the dialectic method, the justice that becomes the principle of history is the power and the authority of the "middle," that is, of contradiction – what Hampshire (thinking, to be sure, more of Spinoza than of Hegel) has called the "superior power of the negative."¹⁰⁰ This principle is now responsible for both the advancement of the process, or the realization of freedom, and for the immanent periodization or partition of world history. The basis of both movements is the logical structure of the concept. Justice is neither in the beginning nor in the end but in the contradictory, fractured moment of the middle. As contradiction is the force that drives the process on by mediating the immediacy of the beginning, the "justice" of a certain stage is measured by the actual capacity to advance the process in its entirety. Advancement, itself, in its contradictory character and actualization reveals, pragmatically, the main character of world history. The dynamic of contradiction involves both the generation of contradictory stances within a certain society or epoch and within their

collective and individual consciousness, and their resolution. Freedom is the unrestrained capacity to advance through conflict and negativity, to affirm transformation and mediation in reality. There is no moral or providential criterion on which advancement is judged (as being adequate to a presupposed given goal) and justified (in attaining it). Nor does the justice of history imply the elimination of contingency, arbitrariness, unhappiness, and suffering. In fact, considered from a limited human moral perspective the justice of world history is indeed, dialectically, highly unjust. Advancement is not always toward (what we think is) the better. In this respect, the justice of Hegelian history is closer to the *dike* of Heraclitus's Conflict. Or, to put it along with Hampshire: in contrast to the ideal of justice as harmony, the historical justice of conflict is always pragmatically "imperfect."¹⁰¹ The dynamic order of justice – Heraclitus's cosmic justice and Hegel's historical justice – is the order of transformation that is higher than the order of morality or (abstract and international) right, higher than the Hesiodic distinction between good and evil conflict. Indeed, what drives history on is not conciliation but the hard conflictuality of "*Unglück*": "*World-history is not the realm of happiness*," insists Hegel. "The periods of happiness are empty pages in it; for they are periods of concord, of lack of opposition,"¹⁰² and no advancement takes place in them. The "activity" that constitutes history is the activity of the "middle," "which translates that which is universal and internal into objectivity" and exteriority.¹⁰³ While this "translation" or "transition"¹⁰⁴ does justice to what is internal and interior and merely immediate, that is, logically, to the abstractness and simplicity of the beginning, or, at the level of *Sittlichkeit*, to the accomplished sphere of the political state seen and lived from within ethical life, it is also a painful process of exteriorization and alienation, the encounter with negativity, opposition, and war.¹⁰⁵ But such is the nature of the advancement that takes place in judgment. This also explains why the agent of history is, for Hegel, the political state – the apex of internal ethical conciliation produces, in the external confrontation of many autonomous states, the highly conflictual, unreconciled development of world history. Thus, *Weltgeschichte* is *Weltgericht* precisely because it is the sphere of ongoing, inexhaustible conflicts, not in spite of it.

5

After History: Absolute Memory

In the previous chapter I have argued that in the later systematics of Hegel's philosophy the justice of contradiction replaces the "ethical memory" of the *Phenomenology* as the principle that immanently shapes the dynamic development of world history. Memory, however, although no longer the grounding principle of history, has not disappeared. At the threshold of the transition from objective to absolute spirit, looking back to the path that spirit has heretofore followed, Hegel has shown that spirit is capable of two forms of recollection. On the one hand, *Erinnerung* has appeared, at the level of subjective spirit, as the personal memory of the individual and the condition for all personal, subjective history. On the other hand, however, the sphere of objective spirit has proved that individual memory is based, in turn, on the collective memory of spirit taken in its social, intersubjective, and institutional actualization. The move that at this point gives precedence to collective over personal memory is similar to the one accomplished in the chapter "*Geist*" of the *Phenomenology* and later brought to the forefront of the debate by Halbwachs's concept of "collective memory."¹ Neither form of memory, however, can be the basis of world history. Hence, the question that we need to address at this point regards the relation between world history and memory. What happens to memory – to dialectical memory and to the ethical memory that internally supports the institutions of the state and gives meaning to personal histories (in the function, for instance, that Hegel assigns to the Penates) – in the development of world history and once world history accomplishes the systematic transition to absolute spirit? What is the function of the forms of absolute spirit with regard to the relation between history and memory? And, finally, can we detect yet another meaning

of memory in connection with spirit, as this is considered in the last stage of its systematic development – a memory that can be said itself “absolute”? These are the general issues to which the present chapter is dedicated. Since my argument so far has been centered on the systematics of Hegel’s concepts (world history, memory, spirit), my focus is now on the *Encyclopedia*’s presentation of the forms of absolute spirit. I contend that the forms of absolute spirit constitute spirit’s “absolute memory”; that their absoluteness is not above or beyond history but is constitutively historical: it is the consciousness of what has historically always already begun in its course; I argue that these forms offer a peculiar solution to the contradictions that dominate world history (even though those contradictions may still persist in the historical reality); and, finally, that in them a convergence takes place between the subjective and the collective dimensions of memory. On the basis of all these claims, I suggest that it is precisely at this level that the “absolute memory” of spirit joining the overall methodological function of dialectical memory brings forth the conclusion of the system – the *end*: not the end of history but of spirit’s systematic development. Herein we reach spirit’s last and highest recollection.²

1 World history and the “Absolute Memory” of spirit (*Encyclopedia* §§552–53)

The systematic succession that leads from world history to the sphere of absolute spirit (or from objective to absolute spirit through world history) raises new systematic difficulties. First and foremost, what makes of art, religion, and philosophy forms of “absolute” spirit – an absoluteness that one could assume should place them above and beyond objective spirit? For, truly, they are *not* above and beyond history but deeply rooted in it.³ They are themselves subject to history and substantially contribute to it. In articulating the structures of the state Hegel famously touches upon the issue of the relation between religion and the state (but also between “science,” that is, philosophy, and art and the state) thereby signaling that religion *exists* within the state fulfilling herein a peculiar ethical function.⁴ And yet, the ethical function of religion does not exhaust the reality of religion, which can indeed be characterized as “absolute.” One could then suggest that the difference between the structures of objective spirit and religion (as well as art and philosophy), hence the difference between spirit’s objectivity and its absoluteness, must be *systematic*, that is, as Hegel concedes, must be a difference in the “principle”⁵ to which their activity respectively responds. However, at

the end of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel introduces world history *together with* the forms of absolute spirit – that is, not as successive systematic forms but as simultaneously constituting the reality of free, universal spirit.⁶ Herein the difference between art, religion, philosophy on the one hand, and world history on the other is not presented as a hierarchical difference in the levels of spirit's development, but merely as a difference in the "element of existence (*Dasein*)" in which the same "universal spirit" displays its forms. Accordingly, in art "the element of existence of the universal spirit is intuition and image, in religion is feeling and representation, and in philosophy is pure, free thinking; in world history [it] is the spiritual actuality in its entire sphere of interiority and exteriority."⁷ What, then, is the relationship between world history as the culmination of objective spirit and the forms of absolute spirit? What is it that in the encyclopedic system sets the latter apart from the former and confers on them an absolute character?

From the brief discussion on the place of history in the early development of Hegel's philosophy offered in the previous chapter, it is clear that this question brings to light the flip side of the problem of the systematic principle of world history. As we have seen, Hegel's early uncertainty as to the placement of history in the system regards the choice between its connection with the *Volk*, or the political state, on the one hand, and its reference, alternatively, to the dimension of consciousness, the concept, and religion on the other hand. From early on, history reveals both an objective, practical development and a reflective, cognitive dimension. It may be, I suggest, that history does not end, systematically, with the transition to absolute spirit or with the end of the sphere of spirit's objectivity; it may be that another dimension of history needs to be disclosed and developed after and on the basis of objective history.

At the end of the *Philosophy of Right*, even before entering the realm of absolute spirit, the articulation of art, religion, and philosophy is carried out on the basis of the distinction among intuition, representation, and thought explored in the Psychology of subjective spirit. Crucial to this development, as we have seen, are the moments of *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis*, whereby theoretical spirit gains the dimension of its freedom as thinking and acquires a first form of personal history. Moreover, I have also shown that in the Psychology intuition and representation are already themselves forms of memory or rather that in their workings, and in the dialectical movement that develops them to free thought, dialectical memory is already active. Thus, the question arises at this point regarding the possible recollecting or memorializing function of the moments of absolute spirit in relation to world history (and

to the entire preceding development of spirit). What role does dialectical memory play in the introduction and articulation of the forms of absolute spirit, that is, in conjunction with the intuition, representation, and thinking proper, this time, to absolute spirit? In particular, what role does memory play in the relation between such forms and world history? Perhaps the difference that divides the successive spheres of spirit – objective and absolute but also subjective – is not the hierarchical difference that allegedly separates history from spirit's absoluteness but is, instead, a difference in spirit's own memory, a difference in the way in which history itself is recollected and its remembrance is expressed. While in modernity, as shown by the *Phenomenology*, world history and memory have parted ways, it is perhaps the case that, at the level of absolute spirit, history and memory converge again in the dimension of a present that is no longer (merely) historical but absolute and indeed eternal.

At stake, on the one hand, is the transformation that memory undergoes at the level of absolute spirit – where it is no longer individual, subjective memory but also not just ethical, collective memory; while, on the other hand, the question regards the way in which the memory of absolute spirit leads to a reflective consideration of the history *from which* and *beyond which* absolute spirit systematically arises, but *within which* its forms actually exist and develop. Both issues ultimately articulate the meaning of spirit's "absoluteness." My claim is that the forms of absolute spirit, developing on the factual, objective basis of history and having the historicity of spirit as their systematic presupposition, convey the intrahistorical, "absolute" memory of world history – namely, a memory that is individual *and* collective, subjective *and* objective, trans-historical *and* time-dependent at the same time. These forms provide a knowledge that is the "recollected history" (the *erinnerte Geschichte*) of spirit, the final integration of historical and collective memory in the dimension of truth's eternal present.⁸ Unlike the "ethical memory" of the *Phenomenology*, which transforms the experience of consciousness into history proper but is unable to extend beyond "absolute knowing" and, rather, disappears in the shadowy world of the Logic, spirit's "absolute memory" comes (systematically) after world history and depends on it, yet it extends historical consciousness in a reflection that reaches beyond the level of objective spirit, constituting thereby its peculiar absoluteness – an absoluteness in and of memory, an intrahistorical absoluteness, as it were. Ultimately, history depends on (or at least stands in a crucial dialectical connection with) the memory of absolute spirit – not, to be sure, for its actual existence (as *res gestae*) but

for the possibility of its manifold narrative reconstruction (as *historia rerum gestarum*).

In the opening section of Absolute Spirit in the *Encyclopedia* Hegel establishes that at this level “the *concept* of spirit has its *reality* in spirit.”⁹ The new reality attained by absolute spirit is its *Wissen* or, more precisely, its self-knowledge. Art, religion, and philosophy are the forms of spirit’s self-knowledge. They are identical with, and constitutive of, spirit’s highest reality, making up the true, adequate reality of spirit. Thus, at stake in this sphere is the proof of the claim that spirit’s absolute knowledge is indeed its highest *reality* – a reality that lives up to and, indeed, surpasses the free, self-conscious reality of subjective spirit as well as the accomplished, realized freedom of objective spirit. Such knowledge is achieved both as the realized recollection of the knowledge of subjective and objective spirit, and as the recollection of the overall realization-process that is world history. The strong “identity” between concept and reality pursued in this way is the first meaning of spirit’s absoluteness. It follows that from now on the development of the *concept* of absolute spirit will be entirely contained within the most comprehensive and extensive *reality* that the previous movement has proved to be the reality of spirit – namely, the reality of world history – and yet somehow will also be ulterior with regard to it. It is, as it were, an “absolute reality,” the reality of world history that now is further mediated, appropriated, and transformed by spirit’s highest memory.¹⁰ These requirements define the range and function of the specific “memory” of absolute spirit at this point. This is contained in and dependent on world history but also reaches, reflectively, beyond it by encompassing (or indeed recollecting) in it the movement of subjective and objective spirit. While the process of *Weltgeschichte* leads up to the *concept* of absolute spirit, the *reality* of world history is not adequate to spirit’s self-knowledge, even though it is the most extensive reality that spirit can achieve. In other words, what spirit comes to know in world history is not the reality of *absolute* spirit. Although, at this level, for spirit there is no longer any real otherness to conquer (the process of objective realization is exhausted in the ongoing process of world history in which opposition and contingency have free rein), spirit must still give adequate expression to the fact that “its concept has reality in spirit.” Thereby absolute spirit’s realization is presented from the outset as a sort of *necessary repetition* correspondent to, but also different from, the objective realization of freedom in world history – a repetition or indeed *re-collection* that profoundly changes the reality of spirit and brings it to completion. Such reality is now the movement

of spirit's absolute self-knowledge. It is the "absolute" reality that spirit acquires in the productions of art, religion, and philosophy, productions that exist in world history and reflect and express the contents of history, whose reality, however, cannot be entirely reduced to history but in a certain way is the double of the historical reality that they express and recollect.

From the claim that the concept of spirit has its reality in spirit, the two connected conditions issue from which the further development of the sphere of absolute spirit depends. First, the "identity" of spirit's reality with its concept is "*das Wissen der absoluten Idee*"¹¹ – spirit's absoluteness is knowledge or, better, self-knowledge, the same self-referential knowledge that is reached by the absolute idea at the end of the Logic. It is memory that establishes the absoluteness of spirit at this point – a memory configured similarly to the "dialectical memory" of method in the Logic. At stake is the same re-collective movement that, extending back to the entire preceding process (the entire length of subjective spirit in the movement of free intelligence,¹² and of objective spirit up to world history), retrospectively and retroactively constitutes it into a totality which is now appropriated as the "reality" of absolute spirit insofar as reflection on and knowledge of it now constitute spirit's highest form of self-knowledge. It is an act of memory or recollection that appropriates the (systematically past but historically ongoing) reality of subjective and objective spirit, whose highest and final figure is *Weltgeschichte*. Thereby memory makes it into the self-conscious and eternally present reality of *absolute* spirit – the reality that its different forms are in charge of further articulating. This act is now spirit's "absolute memory." And, yet, while memory appropriates and constitutes the past process as the totality in which spirit now displays its reality and knowledge, memory also fundamentally alters such reality and provides a different knowledge of it, that is, a knowledge that is not merely historical knowledge. Herein lies the new direction taken by the movement of absolute spirit, the distinctive activity of its absolute memory recollected in the three forms, or elements, of artistic intuition, religious representation, and philosophical thinking. Herein lies the difference between absolute spirit and history (considered both as *res gestae* and as *historia rerum gestarum*). Since neither the ethical nor the absolute memory of spirit can be the foundation of history, spirit's highest memory has history as its necessary basis and presupposition. Through it, however, history acquires a new, indeed an "absolute" dimension – both in the form of spirit's self-knowledge and in the reality of the works of art, religion, and philosophy, a reality at once historically conditioned and eternally present.

The second condition that Hegel sets up at the beginning of the last division of the *Encyclopedia* brings to the forefront the connection with the movement of liberation of intelligence in the psychology of subjective spirit. It suggests that the identity of concept and reality, which first introduces the level of absolute spirit, expresses the necessity that intelligence, potentially “free in itself” (*an sich*),¹³ be liberated in its reality to its concept, attaining thereby a “figure” (*Gestalt*) able to display value and dignity commensurate with the concept of the free intelligence living and acting in a world that is now not only the reality of world history but the reality of absolute spirit. That the *actuality* of free intelligence must confer to the *concept* of free intelligence a “worthy figure” (*würdige Gestalt*) – thereby serving as the “vessel(s)” of its honor – is the program that the development of absolute spirit sets out to fulfill.¹⁴ Here again, memory plays a fundamental role. The memory that, going back to spirit’s systematic past, establishes its concept as “absolute” at this level is the generative principle of spirit’s poietic activity, of its productions in the different realms of art, religion, and philosophy. In the reality of these forms, the subjective and objective dimensions of spirit – the subjective value of free intelligence and the objective value of the free ethical community – are recollected and raised to their self-conscious absoluteness, that is, to a value that exceeds both individuality and community, that is world-historical and contingent but also eternal and necessary. The reality that lives in the absolute memory of spirit and constitutes its present actuality (*Gegenwart*) is not just an epoch or stage of world history but its reflected double, as it were. It is a reality in the element, respectively, of intuition and imagination, religious representation, and thought, a reality that is, at the same time, historically past and fully present or contemporary. It is not directly the epoch of Greek history, for example, but Greek art, religion, and philosophy – or, Greek history doubled and reflected and embodied in the works of art, religion, and philosophy. Moreover, in these forms, the personal history of subjective spirit, already rendered universal in the life of the ethical community, displays a new constitutive relevance, this time as a cipher of world history itself. While the force of contradiction dominates and advances history with its tensions, the function of the absolute memory of spirit is to reconcile the conflict in the element of intuition, feeling, imagination, and free thought.

The first “necessary side” of the concept of absolute spirit implies a cognition (*Wissen*) whose absoluteness goes back to the culmination of the Logic. The second side refers, instead, to a reality (*Wirklichkeit*) whose formation and liberation involves the participation of free

intelligence. Framing the new level of absolute spirit in this way, Hegel suggests that at this point the development of subjective and objective spirit should be regarded as the “pathway” (*Weg*) on and through which the formation of absolute spirit’s “existence” takes place.¹⁵ In the 1817 *Encyclopedia* Hegel dwells on a consideration of the subjective meaning of this pathway. Absolute spirit is viewed, in this perspective, as the result of a phenomenology of subjective spirit that, “*begrifflos*” at the beginning, eventually conquers its own essence and a free identity with it, thereby producing its own “absolute reality.”¹⁶ Thus, what first constitutes spirit in its “absolute” character or position is the act of *Erinnerung* that discloses the story and the pathway of its genesis – spirit *becomes* absolute by recollecting all that it has been as subjective and objective spirit.

The demonstrative aim presented in *Encyclopedia* §553 can be recapitulated as follows. Spirit will prove itself *truly absolute* if the forms of its further systematic development beyond subjective and objective spirit (and particularly beyond world history) being figures of spirit’s self-knowledge do, indeed, instantiate a reality that is other than the one of objective spirit and, in particular, of world history and yet contained within it; if spirit’s *Wissen* proves itself to be a *Wirklichkeit* in which spirit knows itself in forms that display the dignity and value of the concept of free intelligence and yet are themselves historical – in forms that are its perfectly adequate and “worthy figure” in history. Both necessary sides – *knowledge* that must become spirit’s absolute reality and the *actuality* of free intelligence that in its activity must live up to its concept – are now taken up in the movement of spirit’s “absolute memory.” This arises out of the conclusion of the process of *Weltgeschichte*, in which the horizon of spirit’s life and activity has extended to its highest form of universality. The final movement of objective spirit is responsible for the transition to a form of knowledge whose content, being the infinite and eternal truth,¹⁷ becomes the starting point of the constitution of spirit’s absolute reality. While world history is the sphere in which the contingency, limitation, and particularity of the different states are given free rein, in the unfolding of its conflicts world history discloses the universal horizon of spirit’s activity. For, in history, knowledge and thinking go necessarily beyond the limitations expressed in the ethical world by particular state interests, customs, cultures, and legal orders – limitations that do continue to exist and yet are overcome in the dimension of thinking once spirit gains a more universal insight into its own essential reality. Between the finitude proper both to objective and subjective spirit on the one hand, and absolute spirit on the

other lies the necessary movement of universalization accomplished by the “universal spirit” (*allgemeiner Geist*) active in world history. Such universalization is indeed an act of historical justice. Within the same ethical whole, or *Volk*, “ethical memory” – the collective memory of a people – already mends and reconciles the differences that oppose individuals on the basis of their personal histories and interests, and raises them to a common universality. Ethical memory, however, is unable to transcend the limitations inherent to the ethical whole, or to withstand the contradictions generated by the clash of different, particular, state interests, customs, and cultures. Ethical memory remains national memory: universal and binding in relation to personal memory but still particular and conflictual on the stage of world history. It is only the universalizing movement of history beyond the confines of the particular states that achieves, in reality, exactly that objective. Only world history can withstand the force of contradiction. But not because history is, for Hegel, the alleged final conciliation of all the oppositions that generate its movement. Rather, because history, by universalizing the power of contradiction, produces the advance to absolute spirit in which alone such conciliation can take place. History is the most radical and extended *realization* of contradictions whereby their *Aufhebung* is produced. The dialectical overcoming of contradiction in thinking and knowing, however, takes place not in history but at the level and in the different reality of absolute spirit. In world history contradiction is never “absolutely” reconciled. Historical memory is not absolute memory. It is necessarily open-ended, unjust and itself the object of historical judgment and justice. It is only in the element of knowledge and thinking – in the “*thinking spirit*” laboring on, as it were, in the substance of ethical life (“*der in der Sittlichkeit denkende Geist*”) – that the contingency, limitation, and particularity proper to the *Volksggeist* and to the nation-state are finally overcome. Systematically, the level of world history is transcended by the, somehow, violent gesture by which the “*thinking spirit of world history*” cancels in a stroke (*abstreift*)¹⁸ the limitations of the particular *Volksggeist*, embraces its “concrete universality,” and “raises itself” (*erhebt sich*) to the “knowledge of absolute spirit.”¹⁹ This is knowledge of truth – truth that is now actual and eternal beyond the contradiction of history and yet always and necessarily within history and itself historical. The concept of spirit has its reality in spirit, insists Hegel. As there is no “beyond” where spirit can attain its absolute dimension, its absolute reality remains an intrahistorical one; it is the recollected reality of a double, the always-present, yet transfigured, reality of an absolute memory.

Thus, the systematic transition from world history to absolute spirit is a transition that takes place in knowledge and thinking alone, not yet in reality. This, I suggest, is the beginning of spirit's "absolute memory," namely, the act of recollecting (and of doubling) in the element of thinking's own freedom of the actual development of objective freedom in world history. Such recollection is the starting point of spirit's activity and production at the level of its absoluteness. Taking up the idea of freedom proper to thinking in its subjectivity – the freedom achieved by the psychological movement of intelligence from intuition and representation through *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis* to *Denken* – spirit's absolute memory recapitulates the movement of history, appropriates its universality, lending it concrete form, and finally reconciles and mediates the contradictions of history in the element of intuition, feeling, and free thought, eventually bringing such contradictions to bear on the individuality of personal history. Hence, the task proper to the figures of absolute spirit – art, religion, philosophy – is to reconcile *in thought and in a new figure of reality* what world history leaves as the open-ended battleground of unreconciled and always resurgent contradictions, particularities, and interests. Here we find the origin of the artwork, of the manifestations of faith, of the ideal constructions of philosophical thinking. The task of the creative, poietic memory that mediates the activity of art, religion, and philosophy is to take the edge off the violent *Abstreifen* with which the thinking spirit of world history raises to its absoluteness. If the "concept of spirit has its *reality* in spirit," then *knowledge* of absolute spirit must, indeed, become the *absolute reality* of spirit, that is, it must reveal *in history* a dimension of eternity, universality, and conciliation that is beyond history. It is this problematic heritage of world history – the tension between particularity and universality, between knowledge and reality, the tension that pervades an existence that is both historical and eternal – that the moments of absolute spirit must negotiate in their development within the last sphere of the system. Such is the problem of producing the "worthy figure"²⁰ of absolute spirit's existence. Ultimately, this is the task of spirit's absolute memory as the final conciliation of the freedom of knowledge and the freedom of world history.

2 Memories: personal, collective, and absolute

I observed above how in introducing the moment of *Weltgeschichte* at the end of objective spirit Hegel already presents the forms of absolute spirit as necessarily intertwined with the world-historical development.

In the *Encyclopedia*, after having staged the transition to absolute spirit but still within the moment of world history, Hegel illustrates the point by insisting that religion, as “true religion and true religiosity,” can only arise “out of ethical life” (*Sittlichkeit*). For, religion is itself nothing but “thinking ethical life [*denkende Sittlichkeit*]” and is possible only within it. True religion is ethical life that in the element of thinking “gains consciousness of the free universality of its concrete essence.”²¹ Hegel’s general claim is that there is a dimension of spirit’s freedom in its historical actualization that can only be grasped by thinking, that is, more specifically, by a form of thinking that enjoys a position from which it can reflect on history while being immersed in it. This is the position of spirit’s absoluteness. Significantly, Hegel clarifies this point as an instance of the more general behavior of all speculative processes. He claims that the movement whereby religion “arises out” of ethical life and world history has the meaning proper to “the speculative” as such, that is, that “that which is posited as following and as being arisen is truly the absolute beginning of that through which it appears as being mediated, and here in spirit, as whose truth it also becomes conscious.”²² The position of spirit’s absoluteness circumscribes the last sphere of activity proper to dialectical memory. Such a position is the act that first institutes the past as (spirit’s own) past and as spirit’s absolute beginning. It reveals that subjective and objective spirit are themselves, in their history, the final recollected memory of *absolute spirit* – that is, that what appears first in the systematic development of spirit is truly the last as the end is the true beginning that first institutes the process in its conclusive meaningfulness. Since spirit has been there all along, now, at the beginning of the new sphere, it recollects itself in the path that has led to it and thereby becomes truly absolute, or absolute in the full display of its forms. It becomes absolute as it can prove its absoluteness with its works – art, religion, philosophy. To put the point differently, spirit’s *absoluteness* designates the systematic level reached by spirit insofar as this is articulated by spirit’s last and highest memory. The “absolute” dimension of the process that spirit itself is, is revealed by its retrospective articulation as the process of spirit’s conclusive memory – its new and last *Er-Innerung* and *Entäußerung*.

In sum, Hegel’s claim at the beginning of Absolute Spirit is that spirit first *becomes* absolute through the act of recollecting what it has been in its subjective and objective incarnations, thereby reframing the preceding process in a different medium or element. This process is now viewed as the “pathway”²³ to spirit’s absoluteness; but in this way it also provides the *content* of spirit’s further reflection and production.

Significantly, this act of recollection retroactively changes the way in which spirit's subjectivity and objectivity are displayed anew within the sphere of absolute spirit. The integrated duplicity of subjective individuality and objective universality characterizes the very concept of absolute spirit. Its movement is not directed forward but backward, as is the movement of dialectical memory and of the absolute method in the Logic. Indeed, absolute spirit is the "identity returning and ever returned to itself." The starting point of the movement is also in itself double: it is the individual subject as much as the "universal spirit" displayed throughout history and in the ethical and religious community.²⁴

The transition from world history to absolute spirit, however, presents such memory specifically as the recollection of *history* itself in the different elements of absolute spirit's forms. Thus, to understand how history (or the last moment from which the transition is made) is recollected and its contradictions eventually reconciled we must take a step back and, assuming the perspective of absolute spirit, that is, inverting the direction of the systematic construction (namely, the succession subjective-objective-absolute), we must consider how the subject, whose reconciled ethical life has been challenged but also expanded by the conflicts of history, re-discovers on this basis her own personal memory, her own individual history, and gives to it a new expression and a new meaning. In other words, we must ask: What is it that spirit remembers in looking back to its own systematic genesis, after world history has been introduced as the necessary and most extended horizon of its existence? What is the story that spirit or free intelligence now tells of itself and how does it tell it – after it has discovered its historicity and the social and political nature of its freedom and has attained the perspective from which to reflect on history recollecting it with an overarching grasp? What is the content and what is the form of the "*Wissen des absoluten Geistes*"?²⁵ The full-fledged, most extensive answer to these questions is to be found in Hegel's *Vorlesungen*, dedicated, respectively, to art, religion, and the history of philosophy. But my topic here is the systematic justification that Hegel offers at the end of the *Encyclopedia* for the development of the philosophy of art, religion, and the history of philosophy.²⁶

In the long remark to §549 at the beginning of the section "*Weltgeschichte*" in the *Encyclopedia*, shifting from the issue of the making of history or of lived history to the issue of historical narration (or from *res gestae* to *historia rerum gestarum*), Hegel offers his general view on the nature of a philosophical reflection on history, on the value of history writing, and on the task of the historian (the *Geschichtsschreiber*).²⁷ He rejects the simplistic teleology (and religious eschatology) that organizes

historical events around the central issue of a “final end” of history (possibly transcending history); and he rejects the usually upheld value of an “objectivity” to be encountered where the contingent and particular interests of the historian are entirely left out. He claims instead that the “end” of history is nothing but the very “object (*Gegenstand*)” of history and that this is also its peculiar “interest” (disinterestedness is not an aim to be pursued in history writing). It follows that in Hegel’s view the primary task of the historian is to understand what the “object” of history properly is and to make this her unique topic (her unique end and interest). Now, since the object of history is the “moving principle” of history (*das Bewegende*),²⁸ namely, *Geist*, with regard to the first task the historian must take into account the results achieved by the philosopher in his presentation of spirit. But then herein lies the chief question that, seemingly solved by the philosopher at this point, is still in need of adjudication for the historian. Which of the manifold aspects of spirit’s reality is the one that functions as the moving principle of history, and hence must be assumed as the direct object of its narrative, that is, as the center around which the events should be organized and judged as they become meaningful?²⁹ At this point, we know Hegel’s answer. The object of history must be a *universal* reality grasped by its *concept*; accordingly, it is the political state – not the *Volk*, which is necessarily (and naturally) particular, and not the individual in its contingent individuality.³⁰ And besides, the state is itself the ultimate goal of the *Volk* as that which lends historical meaning and universal validity to a people’s existence (hence the corollary: a people without state has no relevant history). Ultimately, universal or world history is political history. So far Hegel seems to re-state the general view he has held since early on, the view discussed in the previous chapter. In fact, in this connection he takes the further step that leads to the development of absolute spirit on the basis of world history and thereby to the mobilization of spirit’s final memory.

As much as Hegel insists that individual particularities and contingencies have no place in the historical narrative (i.e., in relation to the “objective truth” that the historian pursues) the reality of the individual in its individuality does somehow claim a place in history. Not, to be sure, as the agent of history (even the world historical individual is not an agent *as individual*) but nonetheless as a presence that cannot be entirely erased or assimilated to history’s universal dimension, and moreover at this point as a means of spirit’s own self-knowledge. Despite its irrelevance to the truth of the historical development, the individual still needs to be remembered. For, although “the mere particularities

of the individuals are the farthest removed from the object that truly belongs to history," namely, from the ethical reality of the state, the individual exists in the state and exists in history. As the development of the sphere of ethical life and its expansion on the scene of world history has demonstrated, the individual acquires its meaning as a citizen and, as such, participates in the events of world history. Yet, the side of individuality irreducible to the ethical or historical universal belongs to the realm of historical existence as well. Historical existence does display a fundamental aspect of contingency and natural necessity that is impervious to spirit's assimilation and constantly challenges the progress of freedom.³¹ To be sure, the individual as individual does not leave its mark on history:³² in its universality, the movement of history inexorably "cancels in a stroke" (*abstreift*) all contingency and particularity.³³ And yet, history does leave its mark on the individual. For this reason the individual is relevant to spirit's self-knowledge. And for this reason the individual must be remembered. This, however, is not the task of the historian but of the different narrator that is absolute spirit. The individual, irrelevant to spirit's historical memory, takes now a place in the absolute memory of spirit. Memory becomes individual again. As "the universal spirit of an epoch leaves its general imprint [*abdrückt*] on the character of exceptional individuals," their particularities become the "media" – albeit distant and dim – in which the universal spirit manifests itself. Often, even "the singularities of trivial occurrences, of a word, do not express a subjective particularity but give decisive intuitive figure [*Anschaulichkeit*] and concise expression to an epoch, a people, a culture."³⁴ In this case, individuality is still connected to the universality of the ethical world in order to be meaningful (subjective particularity, in its atomistic isolation, is indeed always meaningless). The connection, however, does not take on a conceptual, universal character but finds its expression in the element of intuition where singularity is maintained and even exalted as the specific medium (or indeed element) through which meaning is conveyed. Now, intuition is the medium of the artwork, the first form of absolute spirit. It is the task of art to remember the individual on the stage of world history, to give to such memory the intuitive, graspable figure that we find, not in historical narratives, but in novels, in biographies, and more generally in the work of literature. Hegel recognizes that the task of choosing the right particulars and of making them successfully expressive of a higher meaning without remaining trapped in the triviality and contingency of the details requires the capacity of a skilled historian – indeed, more properly, of an artist-historian, an artist to whom

the historical sense intuitively belongs.³⁵ Hegel's example at this point is Walter Scott's historical novels.³⁶ But it is in the novel in general, which Hegel contrasts to the "objective" narrative of the historian, that individuality can finally tell its story. While "private events" and emotional states have nothing to contribute with regard to the "objective truth" at stake in historical narratives, objective truth is not the aim of absolute spirit's activity to which a subjective dimension necessarily belongs on the basis of its very genesis. In other words, just as history writing fails when it loses itself in individual trivialities and does not pursue objective historical truth (that is, when it misses its central object, which is the political state), so do novels fail when they disregard the individual in its living connection with a higher meaning. What we have, in the literary narrative, is history remembered in a different perspective, with a different aim. In its artistic expression, absolute memory is private again, yet aiming at a universal truth that includes but is not limited to (and is rather more extended than) the horizon of history. "The interest of biography," observes Hegel at this point, offering a crucial opening to Wilhelm Dilthey's successive reflection, "seems to run directly counter to any universal end; yet biography too has for its background the historical world, with which the individual is essentially bound up."³⁷ Herein, since the "object" and the "interest" of biographical narration are different than those of history writing, although the historical world remains in the background, things like humor, subjective originality, imagination, and invention may be allowed and even be the most appropriate vehicles for truth.

To confirm that his aim in this remark is to introduce a reflection on the relation between world history and the forms of absolute spirit even before reaching the sphere of absolute spirit, Hegel lets the discussion of the specific object of the history of philosophy and religion follow the distinction between historical and literary narrative. Here as well, the issue regards the clear understanding of what is the "object" (*Gegenstand* and *Sache*) of history. While in the case of "political history" the object is the state, in the case of religion and philosophy the object is "truth." To this center all the events in the world of spirit, all its individual instances and actions must be referred; on its basis they must be judged. Thereby Hegel counters the generally accepted view that the history of religion and philosophy is inevitably "subjective" in the sense of not presenting truth but only individual opinions and representations. The history of philosophy is, instead, the "universal history" in which the "universal spirit" recollects itself from the exteriority of world history, gaining the absolute dimension of its innermost truth – a truth that is

both subjective and objective, is spirit's "consciousness of itself and of its essence" and the knowledge that "reason is in history." And this is properly *philosophical* knowledge.³⁸

Thus, Hegel's view can be summarized as follows. At the level of subjective spirit, intelligence first gains a dimension of subjectivity (not as soul or consciousness but specifically as *Geist*) and a first form of freedom when it is able to "recollect" itself in the memory of a story, which it ascribes to itself as its own subjective and individual story, thereby rescuing the contents of its mental activity from the givenness and contingency of what seems merely found. Free intelligence is intelligence that recollects itself from the givenness of the world and thereby posits itself in its free singularity. Recollection is the original appropriation which – at work in intuition, representation, in language and in the making of images and signs – first posits the contents of intelligence as given to it and posits the subject as a content-determined thinking subject. This first step, however, if considered now in the perspective of absolute spirit, appears indeed as the trivial recollection of contingent details that, hardly displaying any truth, can find no place in spirit's broader narrative – neither historical nor biographical.³⁹ For, the individual story gains relevance only to the extent that it is connected to, communicated, and narrated within an intersubjective context: the individual is a moment of the universal.⁴⁰ Within the ethical universal, however, the story is no longer the individual's private story or, better, is no longer the story of "subjective spirit" or free intelligence. Spirit (and its freedom) has become objective. The individual is a subject existing in the ethical world, is a family member, member of a corporation, citizen, and so forth, and her personal story gains a meaning only to the extent that it is intertwined with that of the ethical world. This is indeed the meaning of the subject's objective freedom in the world. Now, when the ethical horizon expands to world history, the context of *Sittlichkeit* becomes itself, in turn, a particular – the particularity of a state, a culture, a people. However, when a moment of history is reconstructed by the historian, the direct object of the historical narrative cannot be the individual, and not even the *Volk*. It is only when world history itself has been surpassed, as it were, and brought to the different level of reflection or re-collection proper to absolute spirit that the individual, this time inexorably connected to the historical world, can reclaim *as individual* her visibility, tell her story, find in the memory consigned to the artwork, to faith, or to religious practices the expression of her freedom – a freedom that is now objective and subjective at the same time. Herein freedom is conjoined to a knowledge in which

truth is displayed in the intuitive, individualized, and concrete figure of beauty or religious representation; meanwhile, spirit's memory crystallizes in the independent existence of the artwork, that is, is no longer the ineffectual self-referential story of merely subjective spirit but gains an existence and a place in the historical world.⁴¹ And yet, even at this level, the individuality of the artistic figure or work brings to light the constitutive "limitation" of artistic expression⁴² – art is the first, but is still not the fully "worthy figure" of absolute spirit. On the other hand, through the absolute memory brought forth by art, spirit regains for the subject the dimension of "subjective interiority" that seemed lost in the expansion and exteriority of world history. Art is the process of spirit's absolute memory precisely because it is, yet again, the movement of *Er-Innerung*, the interiorization whereby spirit posits what it presupposes in the dimension of its innermost truth – the expression of free subjectivity and subjective conscience.⁴³ But, like all memory, art is also the exteriorization and expression (*Entäußerung*) that embraces history and continues it.

In religion, the recollection of the dimension of subjective interiority from the ethical world is repeated and reinforced in the movement through which subjectivity is liberated from the finitude of its starting point and elevated to the representation of the divine and the rational concept as well as to the universal dimension of the religious community and its practices. This is indeed the double register on which Hegel articulates the transition from world history to absolute spirit in §552 and its remark. In the concept of "true religion" (i.e., of "revealed" or "absolute" religion), the second moment of absolute spirit, absolute spirit itself is the recollected content, while the movement of memory's exteriorization is present in the spiritual continuity of the action of its "manifesting" (*Manifestieren*) and revealing – "spirit is spirit only to the extent that it is for spirit," that is, insofar as it manifests itself in the spiritual world.⁴⁴

If we look back to the development of the chapter *CC. Die Religion* in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, we see that Hegel's problem in 1807 is similar to, but also fundamentally different from, the one later addressed in the transition from *Weltgeschichte* to Absolute Spirit. For one thing, at stake in the phenomenological concept of religion is the conciliation of the ahistorical dimension of spirit's "moments" with the historicity of spirit's development throughout its "figures," that is, ultimately, the final proof of the claim that spirit in its totality (i.e., in the totality of its figures and moments) is historical – the claim that substance is subject.⁴⁵ In the encyclopedic exposition, by contrast, once the level of absolute

spirit is reached, spirit's historicity is a settled issue and the idea of an eschatological structure of history (or of a providential goal of history beyond history) is refuted by the secularized philosophical account of world history as being itself the *Weltgericht* so that the task is now to furnish spirit with its adequate and "worthy figure"⁴⁶ in which the concept and the reality of *absolute spirit* ultimately converge. For another thing, in *CC. Die Religion* we meet the next epochal "recollection" of the phenomenological development after the one that introduced world history in the chapter *BB. Der Geist*, and before the conclusive recollection of Absolute Knowing, which dissolves history in the shadowy realm of the Logic. On this point, the memorializing function of religion in relation to world history is common to both Hegel's early and later position. In both cases, at stake is the conciliation between effectual history and its transcendent meaning, the relation between the eternal essence and its worldly manifestation.⁴⁷ It is the task of spirit's absolute memory to achieve such conciliation. In the *Phenomenology*, however, what religious representation as consciousness of the eternal essence recollects is precisely the historical, worldly dimension of its knowledge, achieving thereby both the historicization of religion and of religious memory and the final elimination of time and history in the culmination of "absolute knowing." In the *Encyclopedia* absolute spirit, arising from the development of world history, must conquer its properly "absolute" dimension beyond history yet still within it; having displayed its function within the ethical world, religion must now give to its knowledge the "absolute" expression of a figure that still exists in time. In the later systematics of spirit, as history and memory have parted ways, or as memory is subject to historical justice, the function of true religion is to reinsert in history a memory that is now absolute, hence is capable of that true recollection of history of which historical memory, in itself fundamentally one-sided and unjust, is instead incapable. In the movement of religion's absolute memory the split that divides the eternal essence from its manifestation is mended in the world's "infinite return" back to and "reconciliation" with the eternal essence itself or in the latter's retreat in itself from the phenomenal world.⁴⁸ Indeed, such reconciling memory has no place in the immanent course of history. It is, however, the retrospective achievement of absolute religion.

3 The absolute memory of historical contradictions

The far reaching implications of my proposed reading of the function of absolute spirit with regard to history, namely, that of producing and

re-framing its contradictions in terms of spirit's absolute memory, become clear once this interpretation is connected to the contemporary discussion, and the absolute memory embodied in the artwork, in religious representation, and in philosophical thinking is viewed analogously, for many aspects, to Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire*.⁴⁹ After memory and history have parted ways (that is, for Hegel, after the French Revolution and after the *Phenomenology*) the memorializing function of the forms of absolute spirit – absolute spirit's *lieux de mémoire*, as it were – is not to call back the past or to reconstruct it within a national tradition but to create a living and plural (and concretely universal), mediated representation of it in the dimension of the present (and eventually, of the future). In fact, such representation is a new reality that is itself changing and developing as it constantly generates new meanings and interpretations. Its significance is achieved precisely by the "element" that lends to it life – artistic intuition and imagination, religious representation, conceptual thought. In such elements the individual and the collective dimensions of both memory and history ultimately converge. As Nora puts it, the *lieux de mémoire* "are mixed, hybrid, mutant, bound intimately with life and death, with time and eternity; enveloped in a Möbius strip of the collective and the individual, the sacred and the profane, the immutable and the mobile."⁵⁰ However, unlike Nora's *lieux de mémoire*, the memorializing productions of Hegel's absolute spirit – the articulations of its "worthy figure" – are neither directly social or political institutions nor empty symbols nor natural objects all tied to a national tradition. They are instead cultural artifacts with a universal and global, yet concretely individual significance and actual reality, a reality that traverses the realms of nature, of individual subjective existence, of intersubjective practices but is also always beyond them.⁵¹ Spirit's absoluteness is the "site" of its ultimate memory – the site that is gained, systematically, after the events of history have made their course (and have been displayed by the historian), and for this reason can be re-collected in the unity of a thoroughly new perspective. The works of absolute spirit are the "sites" of a meaningful recollection of history in the dimension of a present that is no longer national or political but cultural in a universal sense, that is, at once, individual and truly global, historical (and, systematically, "post-historical") and eternal.

On the basis of the structure of dialectical memory, we can infer that what absolute spirit produces in recalling and apparently repeating the path of objective and subjective spirit are now new forms and a thoroughly new reality. Absolute memory does not bring us back to spirit's past as something that has always been there. Instead, it first posits the

past as spirit's eternal present thereby generating the new figures that constitute its absolute reality – at once its “worthy” figures and *lieux de mémoire*. It is with this last act of dialectical memory that universal spirit produces, for the very first time, a reality that is a truly *universal* (human) reality, that is, a reality that is no longer confined to the limits of national states, particular cultures and languages, and individual stories, that is no longer the limited and original possession of a people or an epoch alone, but is instead a reality that fundamentally transcends all these limitations. The universal reality of absolute spirit transcends these limitations in force of the way in which it is produced by a spirit that has eventually reached the systematic position of its absoluteness, that is, the only position from which an act of recollection with truly universal depth and breath is possible. For, it is only at this point, namely, systematically, at the end of its overall development, that spirit can remember in a truly universal way – just as only at the end of the Logic can the idea, which is only now “absolute,” recollect itself in the structures of the “absolute method.”⁵² Herein lies the realized, truly universal value of art, religion, and philosophy. In this universality we find a first sense of the “conciliation” achieved by the forms of absolute spirit. The universality of world history is constitutively animated by contradiction; it is precarious, transitory, and contingent, and such that it does not truly belong to all humankind. It is a universality that is only contingently, temporarily, and conditionally universal because the *Weltgeist* that is successively appointed as the carrier of the universal spirit and as the representative of its “absolute right” is itself a particular, the force and absoluteness of its right is based on exclusion (the other *Volksgeister* are simply “*rechtlos*” in front of it), and, in addition, it plays this role only within the limits of a determinate phase of world history.⁵³ Only the “concrete universality” of absolute spirit is able to overcome the contradiction of the limited universality of the *Weltgeist*.⁵⁴ For, it is the universality of that which expresses, this time in the most inclusive way, the “deepest interests of humanity” and brings to consciousness “the most comprehensive truths of spirit.”⁵⁵ As such it belongs to humanity not in force of an imposition as the right of history does, but on the basis of the recognized and validated universality of its truth.

How then do the forms of absolute spirit relate to the contradictions of history, that is, ultimately, to the dialectical dynamism of historical processes? In what sense and to what extent are such contradictions “reconciled” in and through the spiritual activity crystallized in the productions of art, in religious representation and practices, and in the work of philosophy? I have suggested that the relation between

the productions of absolute spirit in its three systematic forms and the historical reality within which they arise and which inevitably (and more or less consciously and intentionally)⁵⁶ constitutes their content is not the duplicating, mirroring relation of reflection. It is instead the re-visitation or living repetition achieved by dialectical memory – a re-visitation that does not reproduce the past nor aims at bringing it back to life but produces the present as a new reality and from this first posits the past as past.⁵⁷ In constituting a new present through recollection (a present crystallized in the artwork, religious representation, the work of philosophical thinking), the absolute memory of spirit allows the contradictions of the objective world to be articulated and thereby *lived* in a different way or, rather, in a different “element” – neither in the hardness of objective facts and events nor in the collective dimension of social and political institutions but in their translation in terms of intuition, imagination, representation, and pure free thought. In this way, if art, religion, and philosophy do not properly solve or directly reconcile the contradictions that shape society and propel history, they nonetheless lay the conditions for addressing them in a different way both subjectively in the individual consciousness and objectively in the social world.⁵⁸ This is true, first and foremost, in the modern world, that is, in a world in which memory no longer immediately shapes and inhabits history, and which therefore stands in need of its *lieux de mémoire*.⁵⁹ Now, at the level of absolute spirit, having surpassed history, absolute memory presents history with a full range of alternative developments – that is, with the intertwined developments that, taking place not directly in the element of existence in space and time but being articulated by the poietic activity of intuition, representation, and free thought, offer to individual and collective consciousness the possibility of new forms of life, showing alternative ways of representing and living historical contradictions.⁶⁰ It is true that in relation to the historical actuality such developments emerge always “too late.” For, being the product of dialectical memory, they carry in themselves memory’s necessary delay. Such delay, however, is precisely what allows history to be revisited in a new light, that is in the memory of artistic imagination, of religious representation and of conceptual thought. Such delay allows for a new form of comprehension and hence of organization of reality. Memory’s retrospective glance is, in truth, the gesture of its looking forward. Hegel famously insists that as the rational comprehension of the world, philosophy “appears only at a time when actuality has gone through its formative process and attained its completed state.” Hence, with regard to reality and its conflicts, philosophy comes

always “too late” – too late, at least, to give instructions as to how the world “ought to be,” too late to solve the contradiction and change the course of history. This, however, is neither the function nor the aim of philosophical thinking. It is not at this level that philosophy can offer a solution to historical contradictions. The specific function of philosophy is indeed similar to that of art (*pace* Plato; but then, their function is not a mimetic one). Philosophy “paints its gray in gray” not in order to “rejuvenate” or to bring back an aspect of reality that has already run its course but to allow for the rational comprehension and indeed “recognition”⁶¹ of such reality – indeed, to transfigure such reality by bringing it to *Er-Innerung*. The recognition of the deeper, overarching significance in which historical events are inscribed is what religion articulates in representation, art in feeling imagination and intuition, and philosophy in the concept. The dimension and significance that the forms of absolute spirit bring to light with this act of *Erinnerung* do not make historical events happen nor do they make historical events change their course. For this the productions of absolute spirit come indeed always “too late.” And yet, their works allow such events to be lived, experienced, and reflected on in a different array of new ways, which ultimately and indirectly may have an impact on the course that history successively takes. Thereby, it is in articulating a new present through recollection that absolute memory confronts the contradictions of history and helps shaping its new developments.

Finally, the forms of absolute spirit can be said to overcome the contradictions of history in the sense of bringing forth the conclusion of spirit’s systematic vicissitude in a way that is logically analogous to the function that the absolute idea has in achieving, retrospectively and circularly, the end of the Logic as a return to (and a final memory of) its beginning. In both cases at stake is the completion of the architectonic of the philosophical system as a “circle of circles,”⁶² a task in which dialectical memory (logical and absolute) plays a crucial role. As we have seen, judgment and contradiction mark the moment of the “advancement” of all dialectical processes. This point is made at the end of the Logic in presenting the structures of the “absolute method” (the three moments of the beginning, advancement, end) and is then developed at the end of objective spirit in world history.⁶³ The last moment of the method is the moment of the “end” to which the pure “thinking of contradiction” finally leads. The end is achieved by the “syllogism” of the method whose second premise is the “*Aufheben* of contradiction.”⁶⁴ As pure logical thinking, by thinking contradiction, returns to itself in the final recollection that is the syllogism of the

method, truth is established in its “absolute reality” and most concrete universality, that is, in the all-encompassing universality of the end that is the “system of totality.”⁶⁵ Following the same structure, the splitting judgment of world history and its tribunal yields to the reconstituted, mediated unity of the concept in the conclusive syllogisms of absolute spirit.⁶⁶ What thereby comes to an end, however, is not history but the system of philosophy. Just as the logical and dialectical foundation of history leads Hegel to replace the traditional metaphysical issue of origin with the logical problem of the beginning of historical processes and to shape history’s development in terms of the movement fuelled by the dynamic of contradiction, so now the same logical foundation allows him to replace the issue of history’s final super-historical or transcendent end or goal with the problem of its systematic recollection by the absolute memory of spirit. It is here that the end of the system overcomes – but dialectically maintains or indeed “reconciles” – the necessary open-endedness of history.⁶⁷ That the absolute memory of spirit operates through the structure of the syllogism becomes clear in the development of “revealed religion” which leads to the “thinking” proper to philosophy and finally culminates in philosophy’s three syllogisms. At this point, Hegel’s system of philosophy is brought to its conclusion. In the three syllogisms that conclude the *Encyclopedia* the idea of philosophy finally recollects itself in the entire itinerary through which such idea has been realized and has proved its truth. Here philosophy also rejoins its history.⁶⁸

4 Absolute memories – of other histories

I want to conclude by briefly illustrating the function that I proposed to attribute to the absolute memory of spirit with two examples that are both very far from Hegel’s historical times as well as from the philosophical horizon I have explored so far. I shall discuss two examples of an absolute memory that, going back to and connecting with another history, crystallizes in the work of literature and creates for individual and collective consciousness the possibility of another present. In the dimension disclosed by the absolute memory of the literary work the (unresolved) contradictions of history – in the particular case, slavery and the experience of Auschwitz – are lived and confronted in different imaginative ways than in the bare facts of the past. Since the problems posed by the history to whose contradictions this memory refers are immense in both my examples, I will approach such history here only within the very pointed and limited focus of the discussion conducted above.⁶⁹

In a 1995 essay titled "The Site of Memory" Toni Morrison offers a reflection on the inspiration, sources, and aims of her work as a fiction writer. At the center, at the intersection of black history, literature, and memoir she draws the issue of self-recollection and memory – personal and collective, historical and literary (or, in the constellation I have followed so far, "absolute"). The questions that get to the core of Morrison's self-reflection here are close to the ones I have investigated above. In what sense is her work as a fiction writer connected to memory, and *to which memory*? And how does the memory mobilized in her novels differ from the work of the historian but also from biography and autobiography? Looking back at the flourishing of slave narratives in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which are generally considered the "print origins of black literature" in America and a fundamental source for historians, she observes how the personal, individual memory that they register is enlarged and motivated by the broader social aim of "changing things" – in particular, and more or less directly, of condemning and eventually, in the use of these narrative that is often made by the abolitionists, of eliminating slavery.⁷⁰ But most importantly Morrison underlines how the fundamental act of entrusting one's personal memories to those narratives is predicated on a crucial act of forgetfulness. What is common to all those works is that there is "no mention of their [writer's] interior life."⁷¹ Paradoxically, while what sustains interest in those narratives is precisely their individuality, personal memory is allowed to be registered only on the condition of omitting what is most personal in it. That is, the assumption is that in order for the social significance of the individual life to be accepted and appreciated, the individual in its deepest individuality must be kept in check. In other words, black history survives in the collective memory at the condition of being emptied of all that is personal. Morrison's suggestion is that the claim that the fugitive slave's personal memory displays its meaning and its message only within the collective dimension of history (a claim that Hegel would certainly endorse) ultimately undermines the "personality" of the story that memory tells and brings to light the dialectical intertwining of remembering and forgetting. How, then, can personal memory – the contents and the significance of one's interior life – be recuperated and at the same time conserved and adequately displayed? What is the alternative to the autobiography and history entailed in the slave narratives? And how does the work of literature help untangle the complicated connection of personal memory and collective history? In order to answer such questions Morrison advances the following requirements: "First of all, I must trust my own

recollections. I must also depend on the recollections of others. Thus memory weighs heavily in what I write, in how I begin and in what I find to be significant."⁷² It is the productive intersection of personal and collective memory that constitutes the basis and the platform of Morrison's own writing. Such interconnection – the dialectic of inner and outer, *Erinnerung* and *Entäußerung* proper to all memory – is poignantly expressed by Zora Neale Hurston to whom Morrison appeals: "Like the dead-seeming cold rocks, I have memories within that came out of the material that went to make me." This, however, is not enough to account for the "absolute" memory embodied in the work of fiction – for a memory that is placed beyond the biographical and the historical significance of the slave narratives of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In fact, Morrison adds: "memories and recollections won't give me total access to the unwritten interior life of these people. Only the act of the imagination can help me." To get that access, we need to move on to a different level – with Hegel, we need to move on to the level of absolute spirit. We need to articulate memory in a different element, calling in imagination, intuition, and feeling. For, only imagination can overcome the limitations of both individual and historical memory and give access to a dimension of spirit that is, indeed, absolute. This, for Morrison, is the special "truth" of the literary work. She describes her writing as "a kind of literary archeology"⁷³ guided by imagination, which is always and necessarily "bound up with memory."⁷⁴ If there is a historical aim to Morrison's fiction, it is not historical in the same sense as is the historian's aim. Her goal or, more precisely, the "matrix of the work"⁷⁵ is the truth ("a kind of truth")⁷⁶ in which the archeological "site" of history (of black history, of the slave's personal history, of Morrison's own family history) is revisited and renewed by a memory animated by the imaginative act. This is "fiction." Indeed, fiction stands opposite to "fact," for, unlike history, fiction does not have to find out "what really happened."⁷⁷ But fiction does not stand opposite to truth. The real contrast, for Morrison, is that which divides literary truth and fact – a contrast that closely parallels the systematic difference dividing, for Hegel, the truth of absolute spirit from the objectivity of history and historical narrative. The truth of fiction does not look for facts in order to re-create the past, but produces an utterly new work, a new present that brings to light what is missing in and of the past (because has been excised by forgetfulness), offers the memory and the knowledge of what has never been there before (because it belongs to the aftermath),⁷⁸ articulates a reality which lives in images, and thereby brings forth a new consciousness. Images, not

facts, are the true content of literary, absolute memory. The facts may come later.⁷⁹ But there is more to the operation of Morrison's "literary archeology." Not only does literary imagination (or absolute memory in its intuitive and imaginative articulation) bring forth the world of the past as a new present, but it also provides, in this indirect way, the most truthful access to the writer's own personal, interior life. It is only from the standpoint of a memory that is truly absolute because it is not made of facts (psychological or historical) but of images, that the world – subjective and objective, internal and external – can be (re-)created and lived anew. In this way, the writer acknowledges, the "remains... at the archeological site" are "my route to a reconstruction of a world, to an exploration of an interior life that was not written and to the revelation of a kind of truth"⁸⁰ – a truth that is as personal and individual as it is collective and historical. Morrison illustrates this point with regard to her second novel, *Sula*, a book that weaves an entire world around the memory that irradiates from an image, from how a name is pronounced, thereby leading not to the historical reconstruction of a past world but to the creation of a new present from which collective and individual consciousness receive strength, focus, and a new "kind of truth."⁸¹

My second illustration of the workings of absolute memory is just as difficult to discuss in a circumscribed way as it was my first example. To do it justice would require me to plunge into an immense history and into a literature just as vast. But this is not my task here. In 1945, upon his return to Torino from Auschwitz and from the months of limbo in the Soviet Union's refugee camp, Primo Levi started to write *Se questo è un uomo*. The book was published in 1947 by DeSilva. It was difficult to find a publisher; and the topic did not attract a large public in an Italy that was still traumatized by the war, and was looking for an escape from the still too-close past, rather than to be reminded of it. In 1957 the book was republished by Einaudi and, translated in many languages, eventually became part of the collective conscience of humanity.⁸² There is no doubt that *Se questo è un uomo* is the work of memory. However, the question of the type of memory crystallized in literary form in this book and the question of the type of memory that Levi mobilizes to write it is of interest at this point. These are also the issues that Levi addresses in the introductory pages of *Se questo è un uomo* and takes up again much later in the 1986 *I sommersi e i salvati*. For one thing, Levi is not a historian and he explicitly denies that the intention and the function of his narrative are to offer a historical reconstruction of the life and organization of the *Lagers*. The *Lagers*, he claims, were a "political phenomenon" and their history is a political

history that requires another perspective and other instruments than the ones endorsed and employed by his narrative.⁸³ But he also denies that his book is a personal “testimony” or a merely personal chronicle of events. Levi insists on not aiming to be a “witness,” although, in a sense, it is clear that he is one – or maybe the point is that it is the book (not the person) that becomes a witness.⁸⁴ In fact, *Se questo è un uomo* is properly neither a collective nor a personal history – but is also both because it is *beyond* both. It is, I suggest, the work of *absolute memory*.

The impetus, the insuppressible “immediate and violent urge” to tell the story and to give it the form of a literary work comes from the present – from the personal present as well as from the collective, historical present. At the individual level, Levi underlines how the book is born already “in the days of the Lager.” It arises from the pressing “need to tell ‘others’, to make the ‘others’ participant” in the experience of Auschwitz. During the Lager time, such a need was so strong and pressing “as to rival all other elementary needs.”⁸⁵ For, to tell the story and share its tragic burden was and is the only way to survive. But the book also arises out of the related necessity to overcome the recurring nightmare that plagued Levi already in the early days in Auschwitz – a dream that is common to a great number of *ex-Häftlinge* as a truly collective nightmare: the dream of telling his story to others and of not being listened to, not being understood, not being believed, not being heard.⁸⁶ This nightmare, Levi acknowledges, has its counterpart in the intention that drives the Nazi in setting up the organization of the Lagers, namely, in the plan to create a world of sheer destruction that cannot be remembered because it cannot be narrated and cannot be narrated because no memory of it survives. This is a world in which humanity has been entirely annihilated because personal memory becomes impossible. Stripping the prisoners of everything (“they took away our clothes, our shoes, even our hair”) is to strip them of all personal memory and of all human personality since those “objects are ours because they are the guardians...of memories that are ours,” and we could never live without them.⁸⁷ In fact, the “*sommersi*” (or those that the jargon of the Lager calls “*Muselmann*”) are those who have no story and no history (“*non hanno storia*”): they die or disappear “without leaving a trace in anyone’s memory.”⁸⁸

But the book is also born of a question that the experience of Auschwitz poses to the historical, collective present of humanity – a present that is, indeed, eternal. In 1947, anticipating the question that some may pose: “Is it worth it, and is it right to leave some memory of this exceptional human condition?” Levi has no doubt that the answer is affirmative.

This memory, he suggests, with the consciousness of the survivor, is necessary for an understanding of our broader human experience, since the Lager can be seen as “a gigantic biological and social experience” and experiment of, and on, humanity.⁸⁹ In 1986 Levi’s question has become a collective question that betrays the burning, unsettling preoccupation of the present. “How much of the world of the concentration camps is dead and will never come back, like slavery and the dueling code? How much has already come back or is coming back? And what can each of us do in order that at least this menace, in this world already so full of menace, be eliminated?”⁹⁰ It is now clear that memory is not of the past but of the present and even of the future, that the memory of Auschwitz in the form that it has taken in Levi’s book is an enduring concern of humanity in the present time.

The first and foremost task of the memory at work in *Se questo è un uomo*, a task that only a memory that is truly *absolute* can fulfill, is to counter the personal and collective nightmare of the *Häftling* by telling Levi’s story in Auschwitz in a way so cogent that it can neither be ignored nor doubted. If the personal recollection must be shared and communicated to others, then the act of communication must be so forceful, unequivocal, and permanent as to withstand the menace conveyed by the recurring dream, that is, ultimately, so to defy the Nazi’s program of total annihilation of memory and humanity. Now, to save personal memory by lending to it the “worthy figure” and the concrete universality of the literary work, to transform personal memory in the work that is *Se questo è un uomo*, is precisely the function of absolute memory – that is, of a memory animated by imagination, feeling, and empathy, but also by reason; a memory that conjoins the personal and the collective in the dimension of a concrete and shared humanity, a memory unequivocally bound to time and history and yet also permanent and eternal. It is also significant that poetry, the recollected poetry of Dante, the memory of “*il canto di Ulisse*” appears at a central juncture of the absolute memory of the book. Levi presents us with the unexpected surfacing of the memory of Dante’s verses (“*Il canto di Ulisse. Chissà come e perché mi è venuto in mente.*”),⁹¹ with the laborious process of remembering them and then of translating and communicating them to his companion, with the life-saving significance that this experience has for the prisoner: the memory of poetry is able even to suspend the reality of the Lager (“*Per un momento, ho dimenticato chi sono e dove sono*”).⁹² It is through the artwork that the writer Levi speaks, beyond the limitations of time and place and even language, to a truly universal human community; it is the work of literature that

now speaks and testifies for the person and for all persons, that resists the doubt of the readers and even the self-doubt of the author,⁹³ that becomes the permanent “site” in which and from which new possibilities of a living confrontation with the utter negativity, destruction, and death of Auschwitz may arise. No wonder, then, that reflecting in 1986 on the process that makes *Se questo è un uomo* and in its aftermath, Levi forcefully declares himself against the belief that certain extreme experiences are “incommunicable,” and even more broadly declares himself against the very concept of “incommunicability.”⁹⁴ For, communication is the chief function and the inescapable moral task of the literary work. Communication is the chief function of absolute memory. In fact, only the absolute memory that (animated by the imagination) gives life to the literary work can say what is otherwise utterly inexpressible; only the artwork can find the words to say what no human language can say, namely, “*la demolizione di un uomo*.” Only absolute memory or the artwork can save the possibility of communication and, with it, can preserve a residue of humanity. For, literature is the only way out of the menace of the nightmare:

[S]e parleremo non ci ascolteranno, e se ci ascoltassero, non ci capirebbero. Ci toglieranno anche il nome: e se vorremo conservarlo, dovremo trovare in noi la forza di farlo, di fare sì che dietro al nome, qualcosa ancora di noi, di noi quail eravamo, rimanga.⁹⁵

Conclusion

Let me now draw my conclusion, looking back at the itinerary of this book and underlining some of the relevant issues that have emerged in the process of reading Hegel's philosophy from an angle that becomes central in the philosophical and historical debate only after Hegel – namely, the intricate, varying connection between the concepts of memory, history, and justice. Indeed, the political and historical upheavals of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have only helped in moving this conceptual constellation increasingly to the foreground. One of the central theses I have established regards the presence in Hegel's philosophy of two distinct models for thinking history. The first model is an early one and emerges in the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in which phenomenological history is articulated on the basis of spirit's ethical or collective memory. The second model arises as a consequence of Hegel's decision to give the philosophy of spirit a logical foundation. At this stage, the idea of justice becomes the principle of history – a justice tied to judgment and to the dialectic-speculative logic of contradiction to which history (and memory) is now subject.

The point I want to briefly underscore by way of conclusion is the fundamental incompatibility of these two models, the importance of keeping them separate and, finally, given the philosophical and political implications to which they respectively lead, the superiority of the latter model over the former. Significantly, while both the concept of memory and that of history, taken in their isolation, seem to develop in Hegel's philosophy rather seamlessly – they are, indeed, transformed from the early years to the later systematics of the *Encyclopedia*, but neither are they unrecognizable in their development nor do they seem to change through radical revisions – once the focus is brought on the interaction between memory and history (and then on the triangulation

whereby the concept of justice enters the picture), then the irreconcilable character of the two models comes to the fore. This result confirms the fruitfulness of the perspective endorsed by this study. But, more importantly, it signals something crucial in relation to the contemporary discussion.

In the phenomenological model, as history is subject to the generative force and authority of collective memory, history's objectivity and truth are undermined by memory's ideological, mythological, and metaphysical tendencies. It is precisely Hegel's recognition that this idea produces a breakdown of history (and that such breakdown, historically, is the sign of modernity) that triggers the need to move on to an alternative construction of the historical process. Thus, the task of the *Logic* is to restore the conditions for historical truth. These conditions are now to be found not in memory but in judgment. If we do not follow Hegel in this recognition, by contrast, historical truth becomes an untenable concept to be simply abandoned. This happens, for example, in the case of historical relativism and of postmodern deconstructions of the historical discourse. Hegel's second model, on the contrary, reverses the relationship between memory and history. While it ascribes to memory an independent value in its creative "absolute" forms (i.e., in the works of art, religion, philosophy), such model subjects memory to the factual authority of history, to the objectivity of historical truth, and to historical justice. The relationship, in this case, is fundamentally asymmetrical. While memory does not, itself, preside over the movement of history, it cannot be insensitive to the contradictions of history and its movement; it cannot avoid a confrontation with history lest it cut itself out of history and not rise to the specific truth reclaimed by art, religion, and philosophy.

Now, with an eye to some of the most recent developments of the discussion, I want to insist on the importance of Hegel's later proposal by dwelling on one single point. Hegel shows that memory – logically, psychologically, ethically – displays a dialectical structure. Forgetfulness belongs to memory, intrinsically and unavoidably; the movement of *Erinnerung* is necessarily linked to that of *Entäußerung*; and the common-sense notion that memory goes back to something fixed and given (the past) which needs to be retrieved proves an illusion. Memory is as backward looking as it is prospective; it reproduces the past as much as it mythologizes it and as much as it creates something utterly new. By exposing the dialectical structure of memory, Hegel not only denies that memory can be the moving, grounding principle of history; he also disengages both memory and history from the moral-ethical problem – much discussed in the aftermath of twentieth-century

world historical events and still enduring – of whether there can be a (personal as well as collective) duty or responsibility to remember. It is clear, on these Hegelian premises, that this problem – what Avishai Margalit calls the problem of an “ethics of memory”¹ – arises precisely from the failure to separate the two models of history and is ultimately the attempt, itself inevitably destined to fail, to correct the fundamental shortcoming of the idea of history based on memory by strengthening their bond through some kind of moral-ethical obligation.² For, as memory claims its authority over history and history is denied its grip on memory, the idea of an alleged moral imperative to remember, the notion that the past exercises a moral claim on the present, hence the moral condemnation of the desire to forget and to erase the memory of the past, become the extreme attempts to save history from the loss of all objectivity, truth, and directionality. This moralizing gesture is, however, a weak and losing response to the fundamental flaw of the idea that history is based on memory. In fact, because of its fundamentally dialectical structure, memory cannot be restrained, controlled or corrected by any moral imperative. Indeed, in light of the second model of history proposed by Hegel, it is clear that the moralization of the relation between history and memory is the response to a false and ultimately unsolvable problem. It is the very nature of memory to imply forgetfulness; no moral duty to remember can sever the link between the two, set memory on the path of objective truth, or correct once and for all its mythologizing and ideological tendencies. The true solution, Hegel teaches, is more radical. We should abandon the pretense of shaping history in terms of memory, for when memory is assumed as the grounding principle of history, historical truth can no longer be saved, no matter how strongly we insist on a moral-ethical obligation to be truthful to memory. In Hegel’s view, the ethical character of memory does not lie in a duty to remember, whereby history is allegedly advanced. Memory does not make history, although it is true that memory is subject to the test of history. The authority here is the higher justice of history. Historical truth does not belong to memory, just as the duty to remember is not a force in history. Memory is neither a source of moral obligation nor can it be shaped by a moral obligation. Memory is ethical for Hegel to the extent that its function is to cement and express the social, political, and cultural bonds of the community within the limits of the nation-state. Such a function, however, does not respond to a moral imperative and may very well be highly unjust in the judgment of history. It is not memory that dictates the justice of history but the other way around: it is history that judges of the ethical

character of memory. And history develops beyond the limits of the community of memory (ultimately, all ethical memory is one-sided and unjust). Thus, by grounding history in the principle of justice Hegel liberates it from both the authority of memory and from the moralization of its demands. This, however, does not mean that the moral question of a duty to remember is irrelevant. It means that it is not the problem by which history – *historia rerum gestarum* and *res gestae* – and in particular history's advancement (and progress) should be measured. For, this is the issue that only the productions of absolute spirit, that is, the work of art, religious representations, and philosophical reconstruction and reflection are able to address. The problem of an ethics of memory, in other words, is not the problem of history but, instead, may be the central problem of "absolute spirit."³

List of Abbreviations Used in Notes and Bibliography

- GW Hegel, G.W.F., *Gesammelte Werke*. In Verbindung mit der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft hrsg, v. der Reinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Hamburg, Meiner 1968 ff.
- TW *Werke in zwanzig Bände*, ed. by E. Moldenhauer and H.M. Michel, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp 1986.
- Enz *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, TW 8–10 (cited giving § number; Anm. for Remark; Z for Addition).
- R *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, TW 7 (cited giving § number; Anm. for Remark; Z for Addition).

Notes

Introduction

1. G.W.F., Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, in: *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. H. Glockner, Stuttgart, Frommann, 1927–40, vols. 17–19, vol. 19, 97f. The different meanings of the term history is a *topos* often commented on in the literature (see for all J. Le Goff, *Storia e memoria*, Torino, Einaudi, 1977 5f. (originally published in Italian); English tr. *History and Memory*, NY, Columbia University Press, 1992).
2. “Die eigentliche, objektive Geschichte eines Volks fängt erst da an, wo sie auch eine Historie hat” (*Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, cit., 5).
3. A. Funkenstein, “Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness,” in: *History and Memory*, 1,1, 1989, 5–26, 5.
4. M. Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, Paris, Alcan, 1925; *La mémoire collective*, Paris, PUF, 1950.
5. See Kervin L. Klein, “The Emergence of *Memory* in Historical Discourse,” in: *Representations*, 69, 2000, 127–50, 135.
6. For example, the fundamental connection between history and “spirit,” the placement of history at the end of the sphere of objective spirit, the alleged providentialism or teleologism, the idea that world history is overcome by absolute spirit.
7. I recall here only two forceful cases, C. Ginzburg’s interview: “On the Dark Side of History,” in: *Eurozine*, October 31, 2005, at <http://www.eurozine.com/>; and the debate around A. Margalit’s *The Ethics of Memory*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2002, see R. Poole’s review in: *Ethics*, 115, 4, 2005, 834–38 and his own argument in “Two Ghosts and an Angel: The Rights of Memory in *Hamlet*, *Beloved*, and *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*,” in: *Constellations*, 16,1, 2009, 125–49.
8. See Klein, “The Emergence of *Memory*,” cit., 135, 141.
9. See in general, Klein, “The Emergence of *Memory*,” cit.; R. Poole, “Memory, History, and the Claims of the Past,” in: *Memory Studies*, 2008, 1, 149–66.
10. See C. Cesa, “Notes sur Dialectical Memory: Thinking and Recollecting: Logic and Psychology in Hegel de Angelica Nuzzo,” in: *Mémoire et souvenir. Six études sur Platon, Aristote, Hegel et Husserl*, ed. A. Brancacci, G. Gigliotti, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2006, 121–37.
11. TW 3, 145.
12. See TW 3, 22f.
13. See the recent R. Comay, *Mourning Sickness: Hegel and the French Revolution*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2011.
14. TW 5, 55, see chapter 2.
15. See P. Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,” in: *Representations*, 26, 1989, 7–24, 8 (originally appeared as “Entre mémoire et histoire” the opening essay of the collection *Lieux de mémoire*, Paris, 1984, 23–43) where the connection is declared “self-evident;” and at 11

- where Nora explores the context of the identity nation/memory as the “last incarnation of the unification of memory and history.” Le Goff claims that “there are at least two histories [...]: the history of collective memory and the history of the historians” – the two, however, are necessarily connected to each other so that one of the tasks of the latter is “to enlighten the former and help it rectify its mistakes” (*Storia e memoria*, cit., 16).
16. The other work responsible for turning the topic of memory into a key topic is the collection edited by P. Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*, Paris, Gallimard, vols. 1–3, 1997.
 17. See Gans’s following passage quoted by Y. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor, Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1996, 86: “The break with the intimacy of the old existence has indeed occurred, but the deeper return to this intimacy has not taken place. The enthusiasm for religion and the genuineness of the old relationships has vanished, but no new enthusiasm has broken forth, no new set of relationships has been built.” The passage echoes in a striking way the preface of the *Phenomenology*. It is interesting that the connection between history and memory is a central topic for Jewish historians in particular. One of the reasons for this lies, I suggest, in the peculiar beginnings of Jewish history, which in turn are reflected in the dialectical connection between the concepts of memory and history. (See also *Eduard Gans [1797–1839]: politischer Professor zwischen Restauration und Vormärz*, ed. R. Blänkner, G. Göhler, N. Waszek, Leipzig, Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2002).
 18. Nora, “Between Memory and History,” cit., 16.
 19. See Nora, “Between Memory and History,” cit., 7–8 *et passim*.
 20. Within the discussion on Hegel’s concept of *Erinnerung*, Herbert Marcuse’s and Ernst Bloch’s positions can be seen as representing, respectively, the two sides of the debate. For Marcuse, Hegelian *Erinnerung* is not a psychological but an ontological category, which testifies of Hegel’s fundamental interest in history (*Hegels Ontologie und die Theorie der Geschichtlichkeit*, Frankfurt a.M., Klostermann, 1968, 73–79). *Erinnerung* is key to Hegel’s historicism. For Bloch, on the contrary, the “magical” spell of memory and its repetition leads Hegel astray, away from a dynamic view of spiritual and historical processes (“Hegel und die Anamnese,” in: *Hegel Studien*, Beiheft 1, 1962, 167–81).
 21. V. Verra, “Storia e memoria in Hegel,” in: *Lecture hegeliane. Idea, natura e storia*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1992, 13–40, 16ff. Verra rightly insists on the crucial importance of the concept of *Erinnerung* for Hegel’s philosophy of history. His analysis, however, leads us to the threshold of this thesis more than arguing for it.
 22. TW 3, 590.
 23. Respectively, TW 3, 586 (*wirkliche Geschichte*) and 591 (*begriffene Geschichte*).
 24. For the connection between *Erinnerung* and the infinite (in relation to Plato), see Verra, “Storia e memoria,” cit., 31f., who does not see any tension between the two terms.
 25. TW 3, 591.
 26. The end of the Logic and the problematic movement of the absolute idea’s *frei Entlassen* may indeed be read as a gesture implying memory and forgetfulness.

27. R§340; Enz. §548.
28. On the problematic character of the notion of *Erinnerung* concluding of the *Phenomenology* see Verra, "Storia e memoria," cit., 39–40.
29. Cited by Ginzburg, "On the Dark Side of History," cit.
30. See J. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, München, 1992; "Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte," in: *Die Weltgeschichte – das Weltgericht?*, ed. R. Bubner, W. Mesch, Stuttgart, Cotta, 2001, 296–311, 302f.
31. See Le Goff, *Storia e memoria*, cit., x, xiv, xvi.
32. As it has so often been remarked, the idea of history as narration or testimony in the first person belongs to the beginnings of historical narrative with Herodotus (see for all A. Momigliano, "The Place of Herodotus in the History of Historiography," in: *History*, 43, 1958, 1–13).
33. R Preface, TW 7, 28.
34. See Nikulin, "Memory and History," in: *Idealistic Studies*, 38, 1–2, 2008, 75–90, 77; Nora, "Between Memory and History," cit., 11; more generally, see *Les lieux de mémoire*, vols. 1–3, ed. P. Nora, Paris, Gallimard, 1997.
35. See for example P. Ricoeur, "Histoire de la philosophie et historicité," in: *L'histoire et ses interpretations*, ed. R. Aron, Paris, Mouton, 1961, 224f.; for a general assessment with regard to Hegel, see the volume *Logik und Geschichte in Hegels System*, ed. H.C. Lucas, G. Planty-Bonjour, Stuttgart, Frommann, 1989.

1 History and Memory in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*

1. See O. Pöggeler, "Die Komposition der *Phänomenologie des Geistes*," in: *Hegel Studien*, Beiheft, 3, 1966, 27–74, 49–51. For different attempts at a "partition" of the work, see Lukacs and Hyppolite, who following Lasson, and confirmed by Hegel's *Encyclopedia* exposition in 1808, view the first three chapters (Consciousness, Self-consciousness, Reason) corresponding to subjective spirit; the chapter (AA) *Geist* corresponding to objective spirit; and (BB) *Religion* and (CC) *absolute Wissen* corresponding to the later absolute spirit. For successive criticisms of this proposal see S. Landucci, *La coscienza e la storia*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1976, 47f. See also P.-J. Labarrière, *Structures et mouvement dialectique dans la Phénoménologie de l'esprit de Hegel*, Paris, PUF, 1968; Michael N. Forster, *Hegel's Idea of a Phenomenology of Spirit*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1998; L.M. de la Maza, *Knoten und Bund. Zum Verhältnis von Logik, Geschichte und Religion in Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Bonn, Bouvier, 1998.
2. TW 3, 23.
3. TW 3, 19.
4. TW 3, 17.
5. TW 3, 18.
6. TW 3, 18.
7. See TW 3, 19. For the connection between the French Revolution and the *Phenomenology* see R. Comay, *Mourning Sickness. Hegel and the French Revolution*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2011.
8. *Ge-wesen*, announces the beginning of the Logic of Essence – even if the past is a past without time.

9. TW 3, 19 – my emphasis. The beginning “ist das aus der Sukzession wie aus seiner Ausdehnung in sich zurückgegangene Ganze, der gewordene einfache Begriff desselben. Die *Wirklichkeit* dieses einfachen Ganzen aber besteht darin, dass jene zu Momenten gewordenen Gestaltungen sich wieder von neuem, aber in ihrem neuen Elemente, in der gewordenen Sinne entwickeln und Gestaltung geben.”
10. Respectively TW 3, 24, and 23.
11. TW 3, 19.
12. I have developed an analysis of the concept in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* as well as the reference to Goethe, in: “A proposito della costituzione della sfera della “eticità” in Hegel: il ruolo del concetto di *Gestaltung*,” in: *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore*, 22,1, 1990, 249–86.
13. *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Weimar, 1883 ff., vol. 23, 219; E. De Negri, *La teologia di Lutero*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1967, 259. For the concept of *figura*, see E. Auerbach, “Figura,” in: *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur romanischen Philologie*, Bern, Francke, 1967, 74–82.
14. E. De Negri, *Interpretazione di Hegel*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1943, 386. Throughout his reconstruction of the “historiographical cycle” in Chapter 15, De Negri significantly and effectively compares the phenomenological exposition with the text of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. The parallels are striking and serve indeed to clarify the historical references of the earlier, more intricate text. For the references to history before the Spirit chapter, a passing reference is in the first page of Stoicism while history emerges strongly in Reason although still not thematically: Hegel's perspective is here explicitly atemporal; see also Landucci, *La coscienza e la storia*, cit., 37f.; and 67 for the assessment of the 1807 work as a philosophy of history, a philosophy of spirit or a phenomenology proper.
15. TW 3, 325.
16. TW 3, 325. See TW 5, 86 for an analogous structure in the Logic of Being; see next chapter for a detailed development.
17. TW 3, 326: “we” recall the preceding movement in the moment that spirit does.
18. TW 3, 325.
19. TW 3, 325.
20. TW 3, 326.
21. TW 3, 326: the figures of spirit “unterscheiden sich...von der vorhergehenden dadurch, dass sie die realen Geister sind, eigentliche Wirklichkeiten, und statt Gestalten des Bewusstseins, Gestalten einer Welt.”
22. TW 3, 330.
23. See Chapter 3.
24. See TW 3, 332.
25. TW 3, 332. See the preface TW 3, 18 in which Hegel says of spirit that it is never “in Ruhe” but always caught in the process of “Umgestaltung.”
26. TW 3, 590.
27. TW 3, 439. See the suggestive Comay, *Mourning Sickness*, cit., Chapter 3.
28. TW 3, 570.
29. TW 3, 570–71, see De Negri, *Interpretazione di Hegel*, cit., 420f.
30. See TW 3, 548.
31. Just as the preface recalls that the French Revolution has sunk the institutions of the ancient régime into the past: TW 3, 18.

32. See Landucci, *La coscienza e la storia*, cit., 51. Landucci reads these initial pages of the Religion chapter, too often ignored by the interpreters, as Hegel's final attempt to bring order in the chaotic developments of the book. While this intention may very well be present in Hegel's argument, I suggest reading it as motivated by the inner necessity to reshape the course of the phenomenological movement once the connection between memory and history has been brought to the fore. In addition, I read these pages as a direct follow up to the beginning of the *Geist* chapter. In both cases, we witness the systematic workings of *Erinnerung*.
33. TW 3, 495.
34. TW 3, 497.
35. See Chapter 5 for the position that "revealed religion" occupies in the later encyclopedic system.
36. TW 3, 497: "*die Gestalt und das Kleid seiner Vorstellung*."
37. TW 3, 498 – emphasis in text.
38. See TW 3, 499.
39. TW 3, 498.
40. TW 3, 498 – my emphasis.
41. Logically, the inference from the whole to the parts cannot be symmetrically inverted into a parallel inference from the parts to the whole. The former is a sound inference, the latter is not.
42. TW 3, 498.
43. See Verra, "Storia e memoria," in: *Lecture hegeliane. Idea, natura, storia*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1992, 13–40, 31f.; this is Hegel's and Schlegel's critique of Plato's still too mythical conception of *Erinnerung*.
44. TW 3, 591.
45. TW 3, 498.
46. TW 3, 499.
47. TW 3, 499.
48. See TW 3, 584: "Time is the concept itself that is there [*da ist*] and represents itself to consciousness as empty intuition; therefore spirit appears necessarily in time; and it appears in time as long as it does not grasp its pure concept, i.e., as long as it does not annul time."
49. TW 3, 499.
50. This is the basis of a philosophy of history in which the eternal becomes present within time – *Gegenwart*.
51. TW 3, 499.
52. TW 3, 500.
53. For the relation between revealed religion and world history in the *Encyclopedia* see Chapter 5.
54. TW 3, 500.
55. See TW 3, 501: In religion the "attributes of substance" become "predicates of the subject."
56. TW 3, 18.
57. TW 3, 588.
58. TW 3, 500f.: "Wenn also die bisherige *eine* Reihe in ihrem Fortschreiten durch Knoten die Rückgänge in ihr bezeichnet, aber aus ihnen sich wieder in *eine* Länge fortsetzte, so ist sie nunmehr gleichsam an diesen Knoten, den allgemeinen Momenten, gebrochen, und in vielen Linien zerfallen, welche,

- in *einen* Bund zusammengefasst, sich zugleich symmetrisch vereinen, so dass die gleichen Unterschiede, in welche jede besondere innerhalb ihrer sich gestaltete, zusammentreffen."
59. See TW 3, 512: "Fragen wir danach, welches der *wirkliche* Geist ist, der in der Kunstreligion das Bewusstsein seines absoluten Wesens hat, so ergibt sich, dass es der *sittliche* oder der *wahre* Geist ist." See Landucci, *La coscienza e la storia*, cit., 68 for the proposal of seeing the figure of *Herrschaft und Knechtschaft* as corresponding to the Oriental world, or Natural Religion.
 60. According to Landucci (*La coscienza e la storia*, cit., 70–2) the problem of history enters the *Phenomenology* as Hegel is teaching his first course on the History of Philosophy in 1805–06. In this view, the constitution of the historical world of the Roman Empire through its philosophies is no accident.
 61. TW 3, 499.
 62. TW 3, 575.
 63. TW 3, 576.
 64. TW 3, 576 "nur an die früheren Gestalten desselben [i.e., des Bewusstseins] zu erinnern, die schon vorgekommen sind."
 65. TW 3, 579 – my emphasis.
 66. TW 3, 579.
 67. TW 3, 579f.
 68. TW 3, 580.
 69. TW 3, 580f.
 70. TW 3, 582: "das Wissen von *diesem* Subjekte als der *Substanz* und von der Substanz als diesem Wissen seines Tuns."
 71. TW 3, 582.
 72. TW 3, 591.
 73. The Logic will lead us, notoriously, directly into god's mind – with no need of a reference to the worldly plan of history. *Erinnerung* is at work in the Logic – yet it operates with no reference to time (see Chapter 2).
 74. See TW 3, 583: the issue of the *Dasein* of the concept.
 75. And it is a historical problem for philosophy: see the historical reconstruction of the development of philosophical positions from the early modern time to Hegel's contemporaries in TW 3, 586f.
 76. See TW 3, 583.
 77. TW 3, 34.
 78. TW 3, 583.
 79. TW 3, 584.
 80. TW 3, 584.
 81. TW 3, 584.
 82. TW 3, 584.
 83. See "*das Werden seiner [der Substanz]*" that is spirit, and its "*Werden...zum Selbst*" in TW 3, 585.
 84. TW 3, 586.
 85. TW 3, 585.
 86. The determination of the "figures of consciousness" yields to the determination of the "moments of the concept" (TW 3, 589).
 87. See TW 3, 590f.; see D. P. Verene, "Two Sources of Philosophical Memory: Vico Versus Hegel," in: *Philosophical Imagination and Cultural Memory*,

- ed. by P. Cook, Durham/London, Duke University Press, 1993, 40–61, 45, who interprets Hegel's "gallery of images" in the sense of Aristotelian *topoi*, whereby a memory of things is triggered by their "place."
88. P. Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," in: *Representations*, 26, 1989, 7–24, 7.
89. Respectively in the Logic, the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit, and the Philosophy of Objective Spirit.

2 Thinking and Recollecting: The Logical Memories of Being

1. In this chapter I shall dwell, in particular, on the Logic of Being and Essence. A more detailed account of the last chapter of the Logic of the Concept is offered in Chapter 4.
2. TW 3, 591.
3. TW 3, 590.
4. As Hegel suggests, against the formalism of traditional logic in TW 5, 44.
5. TW 5, 43f.
6. See, in general, S. Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic*, West Lafayette, Indiana, Purdue University Press, 2006, Part I, chapter 7.
7. TW 5, 55—my emphasis.
8. A different perspective on these "shadows" will be gained at the end of the itinerary of the philosophy of spirit: see Chapter 5 and TW 13, 207 with reference to Schiller.
9. According to the Idea of the True and the Idea of the Good, which emerge at the end of the Logic.
10. TW 5, 55f.
11. For Hegel's discussion of Plato's myth of the cave, see TW 19, 36f.
12. See TW 5, 53f.
13. Respectively, TW 6, 557 (with reference to Plato) and TW 5, 55.
14. Enz. §67.
15. Enz. §67 makes the point with regard to the forms of the ethical, juridical, and religious life.
16. TW 5, 59–62; a parallel claim in the Psychology is in Enz. §444 Anm.
17. Enz. §79 Anm.; see my "Dialectic, Understanding, and Reason: How Does Hegel's Logic Begin?," in: *The Dimensions of Hegel's Dialectic*, ed. by N. Limnatis, New York and London, Continuum, 2010, 12–30.
18. See TW 6, 487f.
19. Enz. §24, Anm. See W. Jaeschke, "Objektiver Gedanke. Philosophiehistorische Erwägungen zur Konzeption und zur Aktualität der spekulativen Logik," in: *The Independent Journal of Philosophy*, 3, 1979, 23–37.
20. See TW 3, 590, for example: the "*Aufopferung*" of the self in knowing is spirit's "*Entäußerung*" in the forms of contingent events in space and time.
21. Enz. §465.
22. TW 5, 43. For this see also my "Existenz 'im Begriff' und Existenz 'außer dem Begriff' – Die Objektivität von Hegels 'subjektiver Logik,'" in: *Die Wahrheit im Begriff*, ed. by A. Fr. Koch, Paderborn, Schöningh, 2003, 171–88; and "Zur

- logischen Bestimmung des ontologischen Gottesbeweises. Bemerkungen zum Begriff der Existenz im Anschluß an Hegel," in: *Hegel-Studien*, 30, 1995, 105–20.
23. TW 5, 16; see the seminal essay by H.F. Fulda, "Spekulative Logik als die 'eigentliche Metaphysik' – Zu Hegels Verwandlung des neuzeitlichen Metaphysikverständnisses," in: *Hegels Transformation der Metaphysik*, ed. by D. Pätzhold, A. Vanderjagt, Köln, Dinter 1991, 9–28.
 24. TW 6, 487.
 25. See TW 5, 45 and the "*Befreiung von dem Gegensatz des Bewusstseins*," to which corresponds the claim in Enz. §467 Anm.: thinking, in the logic, is the development of reason in the "*gegensatzlose[n] Element[e]*" of pure thinking.
 26. Enz. §444 Anm.; §467 Anm.
 27. See Enz. §444.
 28. Hence, thinking is free *in* the materiality of its content; it is not free *from* it as S. Otto claims (S. Otto/V. Vitiello, *Vico-Hegel. La memoria e il sacro*, Napoli, Città del Sole, 2001); see also A. De Laurentiis, *Subjects in the Ancient and Modern World*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, 41–8.
 29. Enz. §465: "*das Denken der Intelligenz ist Gedanken haben*." For a detailed analysis of the idea of thinking in the Psychology, see Fulda, *Vom Gedächtnis zum Denken*, cit.
 30. Enz. §444.
 31. Enz. §453 Anm.
 32. TW 5, 83.
 33. TW 6, 550.
 34. Enz. §443.
 35. Enz. §443.
 36. TW 5, 55.
 37. See the "Entschluß" in TW 6, 573. The last page of the *Science of Logic* has attracted criticism since early on (I address these early criticisms, for example, Schelling's and Trendelenburg's, in my "Pensiero e realtà nell'idea hegeliana della Logica come fondazione del sistema della filosofia," in: *Discipline Filosofiche*, 5, 1995, 1, 141–60; see also R.P. Horstmann, "Logifizierte Natur oder naturalisierte Logik? Bemerkungen zu Schellings Hegel-Kritik," in: *Hegels Philosophie der Natur*, ed. by R.P. Horstmann, M.J. Petry, Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, 1986, 290–309; S. Houlgate, "Schelling's Critique of Hegel's Science of Logic," in: *The Review of Metaphysics*, 53, 1, 1999, 99–128; J. Schmidt, *Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik und ihre Kritik durch A. Trendelenburg*, München, Berchmans Verlag, 1977).
 38. Enz. §445.
 39. I take "method" in the sense given to it by Hegel in the conclusion of the Logic in the thematization of the "absolute method" (see A. Nuzzo, "The Idea of 'Method' in Hegel's Science of Logic – A Method for Finite Thinking and Absolute Knowing," in: *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, 39/40, 1999, 1–18).
 40. As with the example of the relationship between grammar and the actually used language in TW 5, 53f.
 41. See, respectively, TW 5, 82f.; Enz. §462 Anm.; Enz. §463; TW 3, 590.
 42. Be this a metaphysical, an empirical, or a transcendental subject.
 43. Enz. §463.

44. This is the reason why, in the present context, what interests me is the methodological import of the concept of *Erinnerung* whereby Hegel renders *Erinnerung* a fundamental function of his idea of history. For the connection between history and memory that is referred to here see the studies by H. Marcuse (*Hegels Ontologie und die Theorie der Geschichtlichkeit*, Frankfurt a.M., Klostermann, 1968²) and V. Verra ("Storia e memoria in Hegel," in: *Lecture hegeliane. Idea, natura, storia*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1992, 13–40).
45. I have offered another development of this question in "Dialectic, Understanding, and Reason: How Does Hegel's Logic Begin?," cit., 12–30. In general, see D. Henrich, "Anfang und Methode der Logik," in: *Hegel im Kontext*, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 1971, 73–95; Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic*, cit.
46. TW 5, 43, 67.
47. TW 3, 590.
48. TW 3, 590.
49. TW 3. 591.
50. Thus, there is no contradiction between the two claims with which Hegel opens the *Science of Logic*, namely, on the one hand, the claim that the Logic presupposes the entire development of the *Phenomenology*, and on the other hand, the claim that the Logic rests on no presupposition. The end of the *Phenomenology* establishes precisely that the logical beginning with pure immediate being cannot rest on any presupposition.
51. For *Aufhebung*, see TW 5, 113f., the remark to the "*Aufhebung des Werdens*."
52. TW 5, 114.
53. The expression is taken from F. Valentini (*Soluzioni hegeliane*, Milano, Guerini, 2001) but see Hegel, himself, TW 5, 112: the moments of "becoming" (*Entstehen* and *Vergehen*) "paralyze each other."
54. See my "Dialectic, Understanding, and Reason: How Does Hegel's Logic Begin?" cit., and the literature discussed therein.
55. TW 5, 86 – my emphasis.
56. TW 5, 104. See my "Thinking Being: Method in Hegel's Logic of Being," in: *A Companion to Hegel*, ed. by S. Houlgate, M. Bauer, Oxford, Blackwell, 2011, 111–39; see also W. Jaeschke, "Äußerliche Reflexion und immanente Reflexion. Eine Skizze der systematischen Geschichte des Reflexionsbegriffs in Hegels Logik-Entwürfen," *Hegel-Studien*, 13, 1978, 85–117.
57. A. Trendelenburg's objection to the beginning of Hegel's logic follows along these lines (see F. A. Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen*, vol. 1, Berlin, Bethge, 1840; and *Die logische Frage in Hegels System. Zwei Streitschriften*, Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1843).
58. TW 6, 13.
59. The concepts *Hinausgehen/Hineingehen* bring back to the concepts *Entäußerung/Erinnerung* that appear in the conclusion of the *Phenomenology*.
60. Ibidem. "Erst indem das Wissen *sich* aus dem unmittelbaren Sein *erinnert*."
61. TW 6, 570, 567.
62. See for example Enz. §15.
63. TW 5, 13 – my emphasis.
64. TW 6, 13. Thereby Hegel elaborates on an Aristotelian thesis. On Aristotle's account, being that is the object of science is *to on*; essence, instead, is *to ti en einai* – that which being "was" in the sense of being permanently, without

- time and change. The Medieval Scholastics will maintain the expression translating the Greek into the Latin of the *quod quid erat esse*.
65. See Chapter 4.
 66. TW 6, 13. Hegel explicitly quotes at this point the beginning of the Logic of Being. An unsurpassed textual analysis of the beginning of Essence is in D. Henrich, *Die Wissenschaft der Logik und die Logik der Reflexion*, Hegel Studien, Beiheft, 18, 1978.
 67. TW 6, 13f.
 68. Significantly, in presenting essence in this way Hegel anticipates – and thereby at the same time debunks – an objection that is often raised against the beginning of the Logic (starting at least with Trendelenburg). To the claim that Hegel's beginning of the Logic with "being, pure being" is not an absolute, presuppositionless beginning because it presupposes abstraction from the manifold determination of *Dasein*, Hegel responds that this objection truly refers to the beginning of essence, not to the opening proposition of being. It is the movement of *Erinnerung*, Hegel maintains, that "has purified the immediate *Dasein* into pure being" (TW 6, 13f.).
 69. TW 6, 15.
 70. TW 6, 17.
 71. TW 6, 21.
 72. TW 6, 19, 20: "übersetzt."
 73. TW 6, 26.
 74. TW 6, 27.
 75. See the analysis by D. Gray Carlson, *A Commentary to Hegel's Science of Logic*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, Chapter 12.
 76. See TW 6, 118.
 77. See TW 6, 119f.
 78. TW 6, 113.
 79. TW 6, 114.
 80. TW 6, 114.
 81. TW 6, 116.
 82. TW 6, 114.
 83. TW 6, 115.
 84. Respectively TW 6, 116 and 120.
 85. TW 6, 116.
 86. TW 6, 117.
 87. TW 6, 117; see 115 for the moment of contradiction.
 88. TW 6, 118.
 89. TW 6, 119.
 90. See TW 6, 119, "*die unmittelbare Sache, als die wahrhaft wesenhafte*."
 91. TW 6, 119.
 92. TW 6, 116.
 93. TW 6, 120.
 94. Respectively TW 6, 13 and 120.
 95. TW 6, 120.
 96. TW 6, 121.
 97. TW 6, 121.
 98. TW 6, 122.
 99. TW 6, 122 (the original emphasizes "*erinnern*").

100. TW 6, 122.
101. TW 6, 122f – my emphasis.
102. TW 6, 123.
103. For a closer examination of the last chapter of the Logic, see A. Nuzzo, “Logica,” in: *Hegel*, ed. by C. Cesa, Bari, Laterza, 1997, 38–42; and “The Idea of ‘Method’ in Hegel’s Science of Logic – A Method for Finite Thinking and Absolute Knowing,” cit.
104. TW 6, 548.
105. TW 6, 549.
106. TW 6, 550.
107. TW 6, 549. See by contrast the curious syntactic construction of the opening of the first moment of the Absolute in the Logic of Essence: “The absolute is not only being, nor also essence” (“Das Absolute ist *nicht nur das Sein, noch auch das Wesen*”) TW 6, 187; also 189.
108. See the expression “the logical of the absolute idea” (“*das Logische der absoluten Idee.*”) TW 6, 550.
109. TW 6, 550.
110. TW 6, 569: “extension” (“*Erweiterung*”); see also 567: “extended to a system” (“*erweitert zu einem System*”).
111. TW 6, 569.
112. TW 6, 549.
113. TW 6, 550, see also TW 3. 34.
114. TW 6, 550f.
115. TW 6, 570, 567.

3 Thinking and Recollecting: Psychological Memory, Personal History, and Subjectivity

1. For this crucial concept, see W. Jaeschke, “Objektiver Gedanke. Philosophiehistorische Erwägungen zur Konzeption und zur Aktualität der spekulativen Logik,” in: *The Independent Journal of Philosophy*, 3, 1979, 23–37.
2. See the seminal work by H.F. Fulda, *Das Problem einer Einleitung in Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik*, Frankfurt a.M., Klostermann, 1965; for a recent discussion of the issue with regard to Fulda’s thesis, see A. Nuzzo, “Das Problem eines ‘Vorbegriffs’ in Hegels spekulativer Logik,” in: *Der ‘Vorbegriff’ zur Wissenschaft der Logik in der Enzyklopaedie von 1830*, ed. by A. Denker, A. Sell, Freiburg, Alber, 2010, 84–113; see also H.C. Lucas, “Der ‘Vorbegriff’ der enzyklopädischen ‚Logik‘ doch als Einleitung im emphatischen Sinne?,” in: *Hegel Studien*, 26, 1991, 218–24.
3. Enz. §440. See H.F. Fulda, “Anthropologie und Psychologie in Hegels Philosophie des subjektiven Geistes,” in: *Idealismus als Theorie der Repräsentation?*, ed. by R. Schumacher, Paderborn, Mentis, 2001, 102–25.
4. Enz. §445.
5. Fundamental critical work on the transition between *Gedächtnis* and *Denken* has been done by H.F. Fulda (“Vom Gedächtnis zum Denken,” in: *Psychologie und Anthropologie oder Philosophie des Geistes*, ed. by F. Hespe, B. Tuschling, Stuttgart, Frommann, 1991, 321–60). I will concentrate my analysis, instead, on the concept of *Erinnerung*. Also important is the commentary

- by A. Peperzak, *Hegels praktische Philosophie: ein Kommentar zur enzyklopädischen Darstellung der menschlichen Freiheit und ihrer objektiven Verwirklichung*, Stuttgart, Frommann, 1991; and his later *Modern Freedom. Hegel's Legal, Moral, and Political Philosophy*, Dordrecht/Boston, Kluwer, 2001, Chapter 2, 110–73.
6. The term appears in almost all the sections of this part.
 7. Enz. §463 – my emphasis.
 8. See the passage of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* XII that closes the *Encyclopaedia*.
 9. Here, I want to make a preliminary remark on terminology. In what follows I do not discuss the distinction between *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis*; I endorse a broad use of the term *Erinnerung* that accounts for two different phenomena, namely, what is properly called *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis*. V. Verra ("Storia e memoria in Hegel", in: *Lecture hegeliane. Idea, natura, storia*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1992, 13–40, Fn. 3, 14), observing that it is impossible to render (in Italian) the difference between *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis*, decides to maintain the German terms in all their occurrences in his essay. See also the classic study by H. Marcuse, *Hegels Ontologie und die Theorie der Geschichtlichkeit*, Frankfurt a.M., Klostermann, 1968²; H. Schmitz, "Hegels Begriff der Erinnerung," in: *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, 9, 1964, 37–44; S. Otto/V. Vitiello, *Vico-Hegel. La memoria e il sacro*, Napoli, Città del Sole, 2001; J. Derrida, "Le puits et la pyramide. Introduction à la sémiologie de Hegel", in: *Marges de la philosophie*, Paris, Minuit, 1972, 79–128, who is interested in particular in the problem of language; S. Houlgate, "Hegel, Derrida, and Restricted Economy: The Case of Mechanical Memory", in: *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 34, 1, 1996, 79–93 who offers a pointed critique of Derrida. Houlgate's work follows a line of interpretation which is very close to the one that I am presenting in the present essay; David F. Krell, *Of Memory, Reminiscence, and Writing. On the Verge*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1990, Chapter 5 in particular (with relation to Derrida); *Endings: Questions of Memory in Hegel and Heidegger*, ed. by Rebecca Comay and John McCumber, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1999. See also, for the relation to Aristotle, A. Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, in particular 287–306; more in general, W. Frühwald, "Erinnerung und Gedächtnis. Anmerkungen zur historischen Vernunft," in: *Recht – Staat – Gesellschaft*, ed. by P. Kolmer, H. Korten, München, Alber, 1999; R. Bodei, *Scomposizioni. Forme dell'individuo moderno*, Torino, Einaudi, 1987, 199 ff.
 10. Enz. §468.
 11. Enz. §426 Anm.
 12. See the general critique in Enz. §445 Anm.
 13. On this basis, I disagree with Derrida's reading of the freedom of Hegelian spirit. For Derrida, spirit becomes what it has always already been. I argue, by contrast, that introducing the freedom of spirit through the work of dialectical memory, Hegel establishes the idea that spirit's freedom first emerges as a new determination which only apparently and illusory, is already there, in the past, but is truly first established, invented, created, and thereby made to be what it is (see for example, J. Derrida, *Glas*, Paris, Denoel/Gonthier, 1981, 34a).
 14. See Fulda, *Vom Gedächtnis zum Denken*, cit.; also Krell, *Of Memory, Reminiscence, and Writing*, cit. 212.
 15. Enz. §440.

16. Enz. §442, §67 (see the discussion in Chapter 2); see §445 for the “necessary transition from one determination... to the other.”
17. I will indicate below some points of contacts between Hegel’s presentation of theoretical spirit and Plato’s account of memory/reminiscence. Notice here that in the *Philebus* the account of desire follows the account of memory: desire has memory as its condition just as Hegel’s theoretical spirit is the condition of practical spirit on the basis of the articulation of its *Erinnerung*. It is significant, however, that whereas for Plato both *anamnesis* and *mneme* ultimately testify of the separation of the soul and the body, the intelligible and the sensible, Hegel’s Psychology just as Aristotle’s develops under the assumption that it is a fundamentally embodied soul/spirit that remembers and recollects itself. Both for Hegel and for Aristotle memory is both a cognitive or psychological operation and an organic state (see, for Aristotle, P.M. Morel, “Mémoire et caractère. Aristote et l’histoire personnelle,” in: *Mémoire et souvenir. Six études sur Platon, Aristote, Hegel et Husserl*, ed. by G. Gigliotti, A. Brancacci, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2006, 47–88, 51ff.).
18. Enz. §444.
19. See TW 6, 550. See K. De Boer, *On Hegel. The Sway of the Negative*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 152–54.
20. Enz. §444.
21. TW 6, 549; see Chapter 2 for an analysis of this development.
22. Enz. §445, §446, Anm.
23. Enz. §445.
24. Enz. §448.
25. *Philebus* 33 e. In *Philebus* 33 c Plato discusses the connection between perception and memory and argues through Socrates that forgetfulness cannot precede memory (33 e).
26. Enz. §449.
27. Enz. §450.
28. Enz. §451.
29. See TW 5, 113f.
30. Enz. §451.
31. Enz. §§452–54; see “die eigentliche sogenannte Erinnerung” in §454.
32. Enz. §§453–54.
33. See Enz. §453–54.
34. Enz. §453. See for this unconscious aspect of the subject, J. Mills, *The Unconscious Abyss*, Albany, SUNY, 2002, Chapter 3.
35. Enz. §453 Anm.
36. Enz. §454.
37. Enz. §453.
38. Plato develops the idea of *anamnesis* mainly in the dialogues of the first period (*Menon* and *Phaedon*), while the idea of empirical memory is addressed in later dialogues such as the *Philebus* and the *Theaetetus*. See M. Dixsaut, “Platon et ses deux mémoires,” in: *Mémoire et souvenir. Six études sur Platon, Aristote, Hegel et Husserl*, ed. by G. Gigliotti, A. Brancacci, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2006, 13–46; also G. Cambiano, “Problemi della memoria in Platone,” in: *Tracce nella mente. Teorie della memoria da Platone ai moderni*, ed. by M. Sassi, Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, 2007, 1–23.
39. Plato, *Theaetetus*, 197 b–d.

40. Enz. §454.
41. Enz. §§455–60. For an account of imagination in these sections, see J. Sallis, *Spacings – Of Reason and Imagination in Texts of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1987, 132–57.
42. Enz. §455.
43. Enz. §456.
44. Enz. §457 Anm.
45. Enz. §457.
46. Respectively, Enz. §457; §458; §457 Anm. In this movement one can easily recognize the functions that Plato ascribes to memory in the *Philebus*: the relation between memory and *phantasia*, its proximity to thought, its capacity to transform sensations into signs, the liberation of the soul from the body that begins with this transformation.
47. Enz. §458.
48. Enz. §458 Anm.
49. Enz. §459. See J. McCumber, “Hegel and ‘Natural Language,’” in: *Hegel and the Analytic Tradition*, ed. by A. Nuzzo, London, Continuum, 2010, 83–95, 87f.; Krell, *Of Memory, Reminiscence, and Writing*, cit., 220.
50. Enz. §460.
51. Enz. §461.
52. See Dixsaut, “Platon et ses deux mémoires,” cit., 21ff. for a discussion of this distinction in Plato. Hegel’s account of mechanical memory is close to Aristotle’s *De memoria*, 2, 451 b, 452 a, and generally to his account of the use of memory for the formation of mental habits.
53. Enz. §461, see TW 6, 550.
54. Enz. §462.
55. In the *Philebus* Plato considers memory an elementary form of thinking (*phronesis*); for Aristotle “reminiscence is a sort of reasoning” (συλλογισμός τις) (*De memoria*, 2, 453 a10). In Enz. §464 Anm. Hegel claims that “the most difficult point in the doctrine of spirit, in the systematization of intelligence is to understand the position and the meaning of *Gedächtnis* and its organic connection to thinking.” Derrida’s analysis (and Houlgate’s criticism of it) focuses on this transition and on the role that mechanical memory plays in it, see Derrida, “Le puits et la pyramide,” cit., and Houlgate, “Hegel, Derrida, and Restricted Economy,” cit.
56. Enz. §467.
57. Enz. §463.
58. Enz. §467 and Anm.
59. For this transition, see Peperzak, *Modern Freedom*, cit., 171ff.
60. An example of irretrievable, deeper, unconscious memories relevant to the connection between objective and subjective history that we are going to consider in the next two chapters, is offered by S. Friedländer’s contention that the “unassimilated memory” of Holocaust survivors (which he calls “deep memory” contrasting it to “common memory”) has the potential to disrupt the narration of “rational historiography.” The former, I suggest, is the memory of subjective spirit that can neither be raised (or assimilated) to the shared, collective level of objective spirit to become possession of world history, nor can it be organically integrated in the work of literature. See S. Friedländer, “Trauma, Transference, and ‘Working Through’ in Writing the

- History of the Shoah," in: *History and Memory*, 1992, 1, 39–59, 55, 41; and the discussion in: J. Edward Young, *At Memory's Edge. After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000, 12f.
61. For an analogous sense of "personal history" in Aristotle's *De memoria*, see Morel, "Mémoire et caractère. Aristote et l'histoire personnelle," cit.; and J. Annas, "Aristotle on Memory and the Self," in: *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. by M. Nussbaum, A.-O. Rorty, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992, 297–311.
 62. This is how personal memory seems to spontaneously emerge in S. Friedländer, *When Memory Comes*, New York, Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1979.
 63. As Peperzak notices, here "freedom" and "spirit" "seem to coincide," this identity constituting both thinking and willing (*Modern Freedom*, cit., 171).
 64. Enz. §469 and Anm.
 65. The object of this personal history is the incipient self of spirit, never the world or the self's other.
 66. See the discussion in Chapter 1.

4 Memory, History, Justice

1. See R§258 Z. In the vast literature, I shall recall only the following recent contributions which, while being generally sympathetic to Hegel, still single out the philosophy of history as the part of the system that is either the most problematic or harder to accept. K. De Boer, *On Hegel. The Sway of the Negative*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010; F. Neuhaus, *Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory. Actualizing Freedom*, Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2000, 216f.
2. Because of the systematic character of my thesis, with regard to Hegel's philosophy of history I shall concentrate my analysis on the final sections of the *Philosophy of Right* and on the corresponding sections of the *Encyclopedia* (see A. Peperzak, *Modern Freedom. Hegel's Legal, Moral, and Political Philosophy*, Dordrecht/Boston, Kluwer, 2001, Chapter 12, for a careful analysis of the *Encyclopedia* sections dedicated to world history). The further question to be raised regards the way in which the philosophy of history that responds to the systematic project therein entailed compares to the philosophy of history of the *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte* (which famously are compilations from Hegel's lectures but not directly Hegel's texts).
3. This is a current expression in the philosophies of history of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. See for example the title of J.G. Fichte's 1806 work *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*; the following passage from F. Schiller's 1789 *Antrittsrede*: "It is the relation of the historical datum to the present constitution of the world [*auf die heutige Weltverfassung*] that we should attend to in collecting materials for universal history" ("Was heisst und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?," in: *Sämtliche Werke*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980, vol. 4, 762); and Schelling's claim in the 1800 *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*, that

- "history has no other topic than the explanation of the present state of the world" (in: *Sämtliche Werke*, Stuttgart-Augsburg, 1856ff., vol. 3, 590); see C. Cesa, "Modelli di filosofia della storia nell'idealismo tedesco," in: *Le astuzie della ragione. Ideologie e filosofie della storia nel XIX secolo*, Torino, Aragno, 2008, 7–46, 16f.; for Fichte, see R. Picardi, *Il concetto e la storia. La filosofia della storia di Fichte*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2009.
4. In his essay in memory of John Rawls, R. Geuss endorses a similar perspective and also underlines how "[T]o identify what are the outstanding questions of the day is by no means a trivial task, but rather one that requires both a certain cognitive exertion and moral courage" – to identify these questions is, I submit, the task of a contemporary philosophy of history (R. Geuss, "Neither History nor Praxis," in: *Outside Ethics*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2005, 29–39, 30 n.2).
 5. See A. Peperzak, *Modern Freedom. Hegel's Legal, Moral, and Political Philosophy*, Dordrecht/Boston, Kluwer, 2001, 171ff.
 6. See TW 5, 55 extensively commented upon in Chapter 2: "[T]he system of logic is the realm of shadows [*Reich der Schatten*], the world of the simple essences, free from all sensible concretion."
 7. De Boer (*On Hegel. The Sway of the Negative*, cit., 180f.) correctly insists on Hegel's different assessment of the historical past and of his own historical present. I indicate here the systematic and conceptual reasons for this different position.
 8. See TW 5, 43.
 9. I have argued for this thesis in "Dialectic as Logic of Transformative Processes," in: *Hegel. New Directions*, ed. by K. Deligiorgi, Chesham, Acumen, 2006, 85–104.
 10. Enz.§25, Anm. "Objective thinking" for Hegel is rationality as the encompassing form of reality and subjective thinking; it is rationality in its purely dynamic movement: neither as (psychological or transcendental) functions of a presupposed "I think" nor as (metaphysical) property of reality. It is, instead, the logical structure that underlies both. See W. Jaeschke, "Objektives Gedanke. Philosophiehistorische Erwägungen zur Konzeption und zur Aktualität der spekulativen Logik," in: *The Independent Journal of Philosophy*, 3, 1979, 23–37.
 11. A. Momigliano, *Sesto contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, Roma, Storia e Letteratura, 1980, 27. A similar claim for the link between history and change is in J. Le Goff, *Storia e memoria*, Torino, Einaudi, 1977, xvii (original publication in Italian).
 12. See G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, Stuttgart, Reclam, 1961, 114; J. Assman, "Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte," in: *Die Weltgeschichte – das Weltgericht?*, ed. by R. Bubner, W. Mesch, Stuttgart, Cotta, 2001, 296–311, 297.
 13. This is logical thinking free of the opposition of consciousness (TW 5, 43).
 14. TW 6, 557, 560 and 561.
 15. Thereby I claim that Hegel's logic cannot be separated (and rejected) from his practical philosophy. The contrary view is held by Allen W. Wood, *Hegel's Ethical Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, 3: "The Hegel who still lives and speaks to us is not a speculative logician and idealist metaphysician but a philosophical historian, a political and social theorist, a philosopher of our ethical concerns and cultural identity

- crisis." I completely endorse the last part of this statement. I strongly reject, however, the dichotomy proposed by Wood. The present work shows that the Hegel who speaks to our ethical concerns can do so only because he is a speculative-dialectic logician as well. My position is generally closer to the one articulated by R. Pippin, *Hegel's Practical Philosophy: Rational Agency as Ethical Life*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008.
16. TW 5, 55, examined in Chapter 2.
 17. See TW 6, 548f.
 18. Respectively, in Chapters 2 and 3. See TW 6, 570. I argue extensively for this claim in the forthcoming book *Thinking Transformation – Transformations in Thinking*.
 19. TW 6, 553: "Es ist dabei *erstens* mit dem *Anfange* anzufangen."
 20. TW 5, 65–79.
 21. See TW 6, 551.
 22. TW 7, 26–8 – my emphasis.
 23. TW 6, 552.
 24. TW 6, 553.
 25. TW 6, 554.
 26. TW 5, 82.
 27. The two perspectives coincide only at the end of the Logic.
 28. TW 6, 554f.
 29. For the "passivity" of the origin, see E. Said, *Beginnings*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1975, 6.
 30. See Said, *Beginnings*, cit., 12.
 31. See, for Hegel's critique of this kind of historiography, Enz. §549 Anm. (the rejection of the search for an "*Urzustand*" and an "*Urvolk*"); with critical reference against Schelling and Schlegel, see Hegel, *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, ed. by J. Hoffmeister, Hamburg, Meiner, 1917, 158ff.
 32. See the *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums*, in: *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 5, 309 for example, where history is defined, "aesthetically," as the "eternal poem of the divine intellect," and the *Philosophie der Mythologie*, where Schelling refers to a "prehistory" viewed as "*absolut vor-geschichtliche*" (see vol. 11, 233, 239). An unsurpassed discussion of Schelling's views is in David F. Krell, *The Tragic Absolute*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2005 (130ff., for example). See the comparative considerations in Cesa, "Modelli di filosofia della storia nell'idealismo tedesco," cit., 22–30; R. Stadelmann, "Die Romantik und die Geschichte," in: *Romantik. Ein Zyklus Tübinger Vorlesungen*, Tübingen, 1948, 153–75.
 33. See I. Kant, *Mutmaßlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte* (1786) and *Ob das menschliche Geschlecht im beständigen Fortschreiten zum Bessern sei* (1797).
 34. See *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, cit., 86; see Cesa, "Modelli di filosofia della storia nell'idealismo tedesco," cit., 39, 42, who quotes G.W.F. Hegel, *Jenaer Realphilosophie*, Hamburg, Meiner, 1967, 270.
 35. See TW 5, 84f.
 36. See TW 6, 555.
 37. This is the case for Kant and Schiller, for example, see Cesa, "Modelli di filosofia della storia nell'idealismo tedesco," cit., 13.
 38. See TW 6, 555.
 39. It is "*Anfang des Fortgehens und der Entwicklung*" (TW 6, 556).

40. TW 6, 555; see the corresponding passage on the relationship between *Anfang* and *Fortgang* in TW 5, 71.
41. See TW 6, 557.
42. TW 6, 556.
43. TW 6, 558; 557.
44. TW 6, 561.
45. See TW 6, 557.
46. Heraclitus, D. 80, M 28; see Charles H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus. An edition of the fragments with translation and commentary*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981, 66f.
47. Kahn says that such identification “is at first sight utterly perverse” (*The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, cit., 206; see his further commentary on this fragment at 207).
48. R§340; Enz. §548.
49. Schiller’s poem already attests to his detachment from the Kantian ethico-theology he endorsed in his earlier years. *Resignation* entails Schiller’s protest “against the very idea of a providential order where virtue is rewarded and vice is punished only in the afterlife” (F. Beiser, *Schiller as Philosopher. A Re-Examination*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, 31; yet in fn. 34 Beiser opposes Peter-Andre Alt’s more radical position that sees *Resignation* as Schiller’s turn to a purely immanent and worldly ethical system; see his *Schiller: Leben-Werk-Zeit. Eine Biographie*, München, Beck, 2000, vols. 1–2, vol. 1, 250).
50. See S. Hampshire, *Justice is Conflict*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000, which has Heraclitus’s verse as epigraph (see also 3, 22); for the model of adversary reasoning and its relation to procedural justice see 7ff.
51. Hampshire, *Justice is Conflict*, cit., 3.
52. See Hampshire, *Justice is Conflict*, cit., 34 in which the moral equivalent of the Spinozistic-Hegelian principle of “all determination is negation” is formulated. Hegel’s absence (and the absence of dialectic) from Hampshire’s discussion is curious. While he appeals to Hume for the idea of moral sentiments and the conception of substantial justice, he acknowledges that even Hume still believes “that humanity has a tendency toward consensus” and harmony in its moral sentiments (37).
53. See Hampshire, *Justice is Conflict*, cit., 56–8.
54. TW 18, 295.
55. TW 18, 305.
56. R Preface, TW 7, 24.
57. TW 18, 320.
58. See TW 18, 307.
59. TW 18, 311 (my emphasis).
60. G.W.F., Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, in: *Sämtliche Werke. Jubiläumsausgabe*, ed. by H. Glockner, Stuttgart, Frommann, 1927–1940, vols. 17–9, vol. 19, 97f.
61. See respectively, E. Weil’s claim that in the outline of a philosophy of history placed at the end of the *Philosophy of Right* there is nothing of interest, “sauf le fait que cet exposé se trouve à cette place” (*Hegel et l’état*, Paris, Vrin, 1950, 74); Cesa, “Modelli di filosofia della storia nell’idealismo tedesco,” cit., 37.
62. Famously, Fichte had already alluded to his *Wissenschaftslehre* as a “*pragmatische Geschichte des menschlichen Geistes*” (*Grundlage der gesamten*

- Wissenschaftslehre*, in: *Fichtes Werke*, ed. by I.H. Fichte, Nachdruck Berlin, DeGruyter, 1971, vols. 1–8, vol. 1, 222); see D. Breazeale, “Fichte’s Conception of Philosophy as a ‘Pragmatic History of the Human Mind’ and the Contributions of Kant, Platner, and Maimon,” in: *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 62, 4, 2001, 685–703.
63. During his 1805–06 semester in Jena, Hegel lectures for the very first time on the “history of philosophy”; from now on, this course will regularly be held throughout his whole academic career as an essential introduction to speculative philosophy.
 64. TW 4, 64.
 65. TW 4, 410. See C. Cesa, “La storia,” in: *Hegel*, ed. by C. Cesa, Bari, Laterza, 1997, 281–313, 290.
 66. TW 4, 64.
 67. TW 4, 65; a later claim concerning people with no state and no political culture (“*ohne Staatsbildung*”), hence without a history, is in Enz. §549 Anm.
 68. See Enz. §547.
 69. See my “Hegel’s Method for a History of Philosophy. The Berlin Introductions to the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (1819–1831),” in: *Hegel’s History of Philosophy: New Interpretations*, ed. by D. Duquette, Albany, SUNY Press, 2003, 19–34.
 70. Enz. §552. See I. MacDonald, “What is Conceptual History?,” in: *Hegel. New Directions*, ed. by K. Deligiorgi Chesham, Acumen, 2006, 207–26.
 71. See, for all, Cesa, “La storia,” cit., 293–98.
 72. R §330, 333.
 73. R §334 Anm., §335.
 74. Peperzak seems, indeed, to deny that world history can be the judge (see *Modern Freedom*, cit., 181).
 75. Assmann traces the beginning of history in the move taking place from Egypt to Mesopotamia and ancient Israel whereby the idea of a “tribunal of the dead” judging of one’s individual life (before the life’s end) is replaced first by the idea of the worldly responsibility of the kings toward the gods (see “*Recht und Gerechtigkeit*,” cit. 302f.), and then by the Jewish idea of a *historia sacra* in which God himself participates. In Hegel’s idea of world history there is a parallel move from the idea of divine justice taking place after the end of history to the idea of an intrahistorical judgment that falls within history itself. The tribunal of justice is now history. See also Cesa, “La storia,” cit., 291 Fn. 34, who refers to the beginning of Augustine’s *De civitate Dei*, I, to the idea of “*peregrinatio*,” i.e., the moment in which “*justitia convertatur in iudicium*”; and E. De Negri, “L’elaborazione hegeliana di temi agostiniani,” in: *Tra filosofia e letteratura*, Napoli, Morano, 1983, 103–21.
 76. See R§§354–60.
 77. The criterion that measures advancement is neither moral nor theological, or providential, but merely logical.
 78. TW 5, 57.
 79. See in relation to Plato M. Dixsaut, “Platon et ses deux mémoires,” in: *Mémoire et souvenir. Six études sur Platon, Aristote, Hegel et Husserl*, ed. by G. Gigliotti, A. Brancacci, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2006, 13–46, 26f.

80. TW 5, 56.
81. TW 5, 80.
82. TW 5, 56.
83. This “turning point” parallels the *Wendungspunkt* of the absolute method in TW 6, 563.
84. Assmann addresses the issue of the “Geburt der Geschichte aus dem Geist des Rechts” in the Mesopotamian and biblical tradition (to which he sees Hegel referring) in: *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, München, C.H. Beck, 1992, Chapter 6.
85. The other place in which Hegel explicitly discusses *Einteilung* is in the “Idea of Cognition” in the Logic, where the partition is the exterior procedure of finite knowledge. See TW 6, 525ff.
86. R §§343; 348; 352; Enz. §549: “Tat”; §551: “Handlung”; *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, cit., 67 has “Tat” and “Werk.”
87. R §341.
88. See Enz. §549.
89. R §341: “Gericht.”
90. R §342.
91. R §257.
92. R §256 Anm.; §341.
93. R §341.
94. R §§342–343.
95. For the connection between justice and action in the “*Tun-Ergehen-Zusammenhang*” see the discussion in Assmann, “Recht und Gerechtigkeit,” cit., 299. My claim, however, is that in Hegel such connection does not simply unfold in the linear progression of time but is rather shaped by the recursive structure of method according to the moments of the beginning, advancement, and end of the process.
96. This thesis implicitly responds to another *locus communis* of the interpretation. What is at stake in Hegel’s philosophy of history is not the fantastic issue of the “end of history,” but rather the idea that history is the end (of objective spirit). See for a discussion of this issue and the literature, P. Anderson, “The Ends of History,” in: *A Zone of Engagement*, London/New York, Verso, 1992, 279–375, 285–94 in particular.
97. R§346.
98. R §343.
99. R§341.
100. Hampshire, *Justice is Conflict*, cit., 34.
101. See Hampshire, *Justice is Conflict*, cit., 40.
102. *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, Reclam, cit., 70f. – emphasis in original.
103. *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, Reclam, cit., 71.
104. R§343.
105. On the basis of R§345, I suggest contrasting the “*Urteil*” and “imperfect justice” (*Gerechtigkeit*) to which individual and collective events, virtues, and feelings are subject “in the sphere of conscious actuality,” i.e., within the state, to the higher judgment and justice taking place “outside of these standpoints” at the level of world history.

5 After History: Absolute Memory

1. See the discussion in the Introduction and in Chapter 1.
2. Recall the discussion of Chapter 2: the beginning, advancement, and end are the three moments of the “absolute method,” i.e., of the methodological function of dialectical memory.
3. See Hegel’s clear statement in *Enz.* §549 Anm. at the end: absolute spirit is not “über der Geschichte” (sort of suspended, like “above the waters”); spirit lives in history and it alone is “das Bewegende” – the moving principle – of history.
4. See R §270 Anm.; in the *Encyclopedia*, this discussion is in §552 Anm., in the conclusion of the moment of “World history.” See, in general, M. Monaldi, *Storicità e religione in Hegel*, Pisa, ETS, 1996; W. Jaeschke, *Die Vernunft in der Religion*, Stuttgart, Frommann, 1986, Chapter 3, for the relation between religion and history; see the forthcoming collective volume *Hegel on Politics and Religion*, ed. by A. Nuzzo, for the relation between religion and the state.
5. R §270 Anm, Fn. (TW 7, 417).
6. Hegel does the same, although less explicitly, in *Enz.* §549 Anm. and thematically in §552 Anm.; see *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, ed. by J. Hoffmeister, Hamburg, Meiner, 1917, 134. Because of the coexistence of these forms of spirit, C. Cesa aptly defines history as the “fourth dimension” of spirit (“La storia,” in: *Hegel*, ed. by C. Cesa, Bari, Laterza, 1997, 281–313, 294).
7. R §341.
8. I refer here to M. Halbwachs’s distinction in *La mémoire collective*, Paris, PUF, 1950, 131–40, which I discuss at the beginning of Chapter 1; see also the recent D. Nikulin, “Memory and History,” in: *Idealistic Studies*, 38, 1–2, 2008, 75–90, 76f. For “erinnerte Geschichte” see J. Assman, “Recht und Gerechtigkeit als Generatoren von Geschichte,” in: *Die Weltgeschichte – das Weltgericht?*, ed. by R. Bubner, W. Mesch, Stuttgart, Cotta, 2001, 296–311, 307. For another suggestion of the sense in which memory is “absolute” see P. Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,” in: *Representations*, 26, 1989, 7–24, 9.
9. *Enz.* §553.
10. See § 453 of the Heidelberg *Enzyklopädie*.
11. *Enz.* §553; see §552 for the “Wissen des absoluten Geistes.”
12. *Enz.* §§443ff.
13. *Enz.* §553 see the “freie Intelligenz” of §443.
14. Respectively, *Enz.* §553 and §552; see also TW 13, 202 for the case of art: in the transition from the *Naturschöne* to the *Kunstschöne* spirit gains “ein der Wahrheit würdiges Dasein.” Recall the role that *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis* played in obtaining free intelligence at the level of subjective spirit.
15. *Enz.* §553.
16. Heidelberg *Enzyklopädie* §453.
17. *Enz.* §552.
18. “Abstreifen” is used by Hegel, both in *Enz.* §552 and in R §360, the conclusive section of the *Philosophy of Right*.
19. *Enz.* §552; see “Wissen der absoluten Idee” in §553.
20. *Enz.* §553.

21. Enz. §552 Anm.
22. Enz. §552 Anm.
23. Enz. §553.
24. Enz. §554.
25. Enz. §552.
26. See, for example, *Ästhetik*, I/II, Stuttgart, Reclam, 1980, 157f., for Hegel's reference to the systematics of the *Encyclopedia* as providing the "philosophical proof" of art's belonging to the sphere of absolute spirit; similar claims are made with regard to the history of philosophy in the introduction to the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (see, for an analysis of this latter issue, my "Hegel's Method for a History of Philosophy. The Berlin Introductions to the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (1819–1831)," in: *Hegel's History of Philosophy: New Interpretations*, ed. by D. Duquette, Albany, SUNY Press, 2003, 19–34). I do not claim, however, that the systematic justification offered in the *Encyclopedia* automatically leads to the development of the *Lectures*. I do believe that Hegel constantly revises and rethinks the systematics of spirit in the successive development of the *Lectures*. This, however, is a topic that can only be addressed by confronting the different *Nachschriften* of each lecture and the various lectures offered by Hegel through the years (see, for an example of this work for the philosophy of art, A. Gethmann-Siefert, *Einführung in Hegels Ästhetik*, München, Fink, 2005, and her *Die Funktion der Kunst in der Geschichte. Untersuchungen zu Hegels Ästhetik, Hegel Studien*, Beiheft 25, 1984; for the philosophy of religion, W. Jaeschke, *Die Vernunft in der Religion*, cit.; M. Monaldi, *Storicità e religione in Hegel*, cit.; M. Pagano, *Hegel. La religione e l'ermeneutica del concetto*, Roma, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1992, 10).
27. Enz. §549 Anm. (TW 10, 349).
28. Enz. §549 Anm. (TW 10, 352).
29. Enz. §549 Anm. (TW 10, 349f.); see *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, cit., 73f.
30. See, for a parallel passage for this discussion, *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, cit., 67f.
31. Enz. §§551–52.
32. The case of world-historical individuals confirms rather than disproves this claim.
33. Enz. §552. See F. Neuhouser, *Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory. Actualizing Freedom*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2000, 216f., who examines the political implications of this claim.
34. Enz. §549 Anm. (TW 10, 350).
35. Of a "geistreicher Geschichtsschreiber" (Enz. §549 Anm., TW 10, 350).
36. See also *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, cit., 15.
37. Enz. §549 Anm. (TW 10, 351).
38. Enz. §549 Anm. (TW 10, 352): "*Erkenntnis der Philosophie*."
39. Perhaps the only place would be as an entry in a private journal never to be read by anyone.
40. See *Vernunft in der Geschichte*, cit., 67: the individual must "appropriate" to herself the substance and being of the *Volk* – she must "*es sich einzuverleiben*," make of it her own body in order to become meaningful as individual.
41. See Enz. §556 and §558 for a reference to the structures of subjective spirit (and for the role played by "subjective images and representations").

42. Enz. §559.
43. Enz. §557.
44. Enz. §564.
45. See Chapter 1.
46. Enz. §553.
47. See Enz. §566.
48. Enz. §566.
49. See Nikulin, "Memory and History," cit., 77; Nora, "Between Memory and History," cit., 11; more generally, see *Les lieux de mémoire*, ed. by P. Nora, Paris, Gallimard, 1997, vols. 1–3.
50. Nora, "Between Memory and History," cit., 19.
51. In other words, it is not Proust's *petite madeleine* but *A la recherche du temps perdu* that functions as a site of memory (see Nora, "Between Memory and History," cit., 15).
52. See Chapter 2.
53. Enz. §550.
54. Enz. §552.
55. TW 13, 21 (*Ästhetik I/II*, cit., 45).
56. See, for example, Hegel's reading of the relation between philosophical theory and historical actuality in the case of Plato's *Republic* discussed in the preface to the *Philosophy of Right* (TW 7, 24).
57. In translating the historical world into the ideal world of concepts, philosophy addresses a reality that has "grown old," not in order to bring it back to life, but in order to recognize its rationality (R preface, TW 7, 28).
58. See TW 13, 207 in which Hegel uses Schiller's poem "Das Ideal und das Leben" to contrast the hardness of existence with its poetic transfiguration. The recognition of this function of absolute spirit is implicit in Feuerbach's, and then Marx's, critique of Hegel's dialectic as well as in their critique of religion. Collingwood, by contrast, offers an example of the view that art plays a fundamental role in overcoming the alienation of consciousness in the modern world (R.G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1938, 282, 285); see also R. Eldridge, "What Writers Do. The Value of Literary Imagination," in: *Journal of Literary Theory*, 3,1, 2009, 1–18, 3f., 10: I do not agree with Eldridge, however, that the theory of the *Aesthetics* cuts "somewhat against the grain of the institutional theory" of the *Philosophy of Right* (cit., 10). I think the former completes the latter in the overall structure of Hegel's philosophy of spirit.
59. The organic, immediate relationship that connects Homer's epic to the contemporary public memory of the Trojan War is such that in the ancient world the strong connection between history and memory renders superfluous the memorializing function of epic. Homer speaks to a public that already remembers; the function and value of art is not to provide the collective memory that history in itself is lacking, but to confirm and reflect the collective memory that animates history. The need for the memorializing function of art emerges instead preeminently in the modern world. It is here that the relation between history and memory explored in the *Phenomenology* yields to the more complex systematics of spirit of the *Encyclopedia*: as memory is no longer the principle of history, history's need for memory is fulfilled by the forms of absolute spirit. See Nora, "Between

- Memory and History," cit., 7; and in a different perspective, Eldridge, "What Writers Do," cit., 9.
60. See R §341.
 61. R Preface, TW 7, 28.
 62. TW 6, 571;
 63. TW 6, 563; see Chapter 4.
 64. TW 6, 563.
 65. Respectively, TW 6, 565 and 569.
 66. See TW 6, 351, 565; Enz. §15.
 67. This is my answer to the famous problem of the "end of history" in Hegel – a formulation that is not to be found in Hegel's texts, but has gained prominence in the recent discussion in the aftermath of F. Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York, Free Press, 1992 (the original essay appeared in 1989 as "The End of History?" in: *The National Interest*, Summer 1989, 3–18), and in the aftermath of the emergence of *Posthistoire*; see for all this P. Anderson, "The Ends of History," in: *A Zone of Engagement*, London/New York, Verso, 1992, 279–375, in particular 285–94 for Hegel, 331–57 for Fukuyama.
 68. See Enz. §571, §§574–77; see A. Nuzzo, "Hegels Auffassung der Philosophie als System und die drei Schlüsse der Enzyklopädie," in: *Hegels enzyklopädisches System der Philosophie*, ed. by B. Tuschling, U. Volgel, Stuttgart, Frommann 2004, 459–80.
 69. The focus of my analysis justifies the limits that I decided to impose on the texts and the literature cited below. It has been extremely hard to impose such limits as the literature on the topic, especially in recent times, is growing exponentially.
 70. T. Morrison, "The Site of Memory," in: *Inventing the Truth*, ed. by W. Zinsser, New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1995, 183–200, 185–87.
 71. "The Site of Memory," cit., 191.
 72. "The Site of Memory," cit., 191f.
 73. "The Site of Memory," cit., 192.
 74. "The Site of Memory," cit., 198f.
 75. "The Site of Memory," cit., 199.
 76. "The Site of Memory," cit., 192, 195.
 77. "The Site of Memory," cit., 193.
 78. See "The Site of Memory," cit., 195: in imagining the world of her father and grandmother – and thereby in imagining what they felt – in *Song of Solomon*, Morrison says, "I have suspected... that *I know* more than she did, that *I know* more than my grandfather and great-grandmother did, but I also know that I'm no wiser than they were." It is the knowledge and the truth imparted by the work of art that is at stake here, not the historical knowledge of facts and not the psychological knowledge of individuals, always already overcome in the collective dimension of the historical world.
 79. See "The Site of Memory," cit., 194–97.
 80. "The Site of Memory," cit., 195.
 81. "The Site of Memory," cit., 196f. A recent analysis of the role of memory in Morrison's *Beloved*, which also discusses a perspective close to Hegel but is very different from the one that I have pursued here, is in R. Poole, "Two Ghosts and an Angel: The Rights of Memory in *Hamlet*, *Beloved*, and *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*," in: *Constellations*, 16,1, 2009, 125–49, 134–9.

82. In the recently published material of a late interview with Primo Levi we find his late appraisal of the changed climate for the reception of his work (and his oral words): see *Intervista a Primo Levi, ex deportato*, ed. by A. Bravo, F. Cereja, Torino, Einaudi, 2011, 31f.
83. *I sommersi e i salvati*, Torino, Einaudi, 1986, 11, 9; in *Intervista a Primo Levi*, Levi distances himself repeatedly from all questions leading to the historical reconstruction of “why” things happened (*Intervista a Primo Levi*, cit., 34, 65f.)
84. Vast is the literature on the topic of testimony and witnessing in the case of Levi (and generally Holocaust narratives). I want only to recall Levi’s claim that the only “true” witness is the “*sommerso*,” the “*mussulmano*” who did not survive, hence cannot properly be witness; his true testimony consists in his not being able to be a witness.
85. *Se questo è un uomo*, Torino, Einaudi, 1956, 8; see 178. The (moral) necessity to write can be found in another example of personal-collective narratives of the WWII years, such as S. Friedländer, *When Memory Comes*, New York, Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1979, 135, 155f. (“I must write, then,” 135). Moreover, Friedländer underlines the difficulty of the process of giving to personal memory literary form (see 155f.).
86. *I sommersi e i salvati*, cit., 3f.; for the nightmare see *Se questo è un uomo*, cit., 52, 74f.
87. *Se questo è un uomo*, cit., 29.
88. *Se questo è un uomo*, cit., 113 and 112.
89. *Se questo è un uomo*, cit., 109.
90. *I sommersi e i salvati*, cit., 11.
91. *Se questo è un uomo*, cit., 142.
92. See the entire extraordinary chapter “Il canto di Ulisse” (*Se questo è un uomo*, cit., 144, 138–45).
93. See *Se questo è un uomo*, cit., 131: “Oggi, questo vero oggi in cui sto seduto a un tavolo e scrivo, io stesso non sono convinto che queste cose sono realmente accadute.” And see *I sommersi e i salvati*, cit., 112, in which Levi asks Jean Samuel, his companion in Auschwitz and then fellow survivor, to corroborate the episode narrated in the chapter *Il canto di Ulisse*.
94. *I sommersi e i salvati*, cit., Chapter 4: “Comunicare.” See *Se questo è un uomo*, cit., 156 for the need of a different language for the expression of the extraordinary experience of the Lager; despite all the distance separating normal human “hunger” from what was their “hunger” in the camp (Levi suggests that a new word would be needed, in this latter instance, for the named thing differs radically in the two cases), the writer does, after all, succeed in conveying that experience. This is, indeed, the value of literature. Levi’s position runs opposite on this point to what has been often repeated after Adorno, i.e., the total breakdown of language and expression in the face of the Holocaust (Adorno’s famous quote is “Kulturkritik findet sich der letzten Stufe der Dialektik von Kultur und Barbarei gegenüber. Nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch, und das frisst auch die Erkenntnis an, die ausspricht, warum es unmöglich ward, heute Gedichte zu schreiben” (“Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft,” written in 1949 and published in 1951, in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by R. Tiedemann, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 1970–80, vol. 10.1, 30). See, more recently, B. O’Connor, “Adorno on the

Destruction of Memory," in: *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, ed. by S. Radstone, B. Schwarz, New York, Fordham University Press, 2010, 136–49. However, in O'Connor's insightful presentation of the problem, which takes many of Adorno's texts into account, Adorno is very close to the Hegelian position I am defending here: the "experience of contradiction" is for Adorno the condition for the remembrance of suffering (cit., 137f.); certain artworks are the vehicles for a "reconciliation" that cannot be found in the historical facts. The crucial difference is that for Hegel the irrationality of the erasure or effacement of memory is not a problem for the development history, since history is not based on memory – there is indeed a partiality both to remembrance and to forgetfulness.

95. *Se questo è un uomo*, cit., 29.

Conclusion

1. A. Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2002, to which I refer here as a paradigmatic recent case. But despite all differences (philosophical as well as historical) I bring Adorno's position (see his "The Meaning of Working Through the Past," in: *Critical Models. Interventions and Catchwords*, tr. Henry W. Pickford, New York, Columbia University Press, 1998, 9–104) back to the same problem, namely, the fundamental confusion of what, for Hegel, are two distinct models of thinking history. Crucial are the inconsistencies pointed out by R. Poole's review of Margalit's book in: *Ethics*, 115, 4, 2005, 834–38.
2. I use "moral" and "ethical" in the Hegelian sense, not in the sense that Margalit proposes (*The Ethics of Memory*, cit. 7–9); I entirely agree with Poole's critique of this distinction in Margalit as being confusing and such as not helping Margalit's argument at all (see Poole's review, cit., 834f.).
3. My conclusion is supported by the fact that the way in which Poole offers his argument in "Two Ghosts and an Angel: The Rights of Memory in *Hamlet*, *Beloved*, and *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*," in: *Constellations*, 16,1, 2009, 125–49, is through an analysis of three works of literature. My conclusion is also confirmed by Margalit's own reference to the religious dimension of the issue of an ethics of memory (see *The Ethics of Memory*, cit., 25 – this point, unfortunately, is left undeveloped; see also Poole's discussion of the connection between memory and immortality, cit., 838).

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